

No Rest for the Weary

by RNG-ERROR

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Summary: John-117 sent to the StarCraft Universe, Full Summary inside. Notice this is NOT abandoned. Until I can afford a new computer however it will not be updated.

1. Prologue

A.N. Welcome to the realm of my imagination.

Now then, rejoice my interwebz brethren for I bring great tidings and what I hope to be my own literary masterpiece.

****Summary:**** This story is a fusion of Halo and Starcraft, during the events of the unreleased game Starcraft: Ghost. With Master Chief Petty Officer John-117 crash-landing on Mar Sara in the Korpulu Sector, amidst the confusion of a Xel'naga artifact being uncovered. Coming across the young Dominion Ghost, Nova and with Cortana nearing complete rampancy the Master Chief searches for a way off planet and back to UNSC controlled space.

This is NOT going to be a whose better a Spartan II or The Dominion Ghost fic. Comparisons will be made and both of them will have their screen time. At the end of the prologue I have statistics, alongside a mini dossier going over their strengths.

I'll probably release them per chapter for fun.

For now I'll be keeping the rating T, but over its course the story may advance into the M rating.

As a warning I am taking a bit of creative license for this story, I cannot guarantee completely authentic to cannon information. If this bothers you I apologize in advance. The majority of my information will be drawn from the games wikia sites and if I can find them the novels. This being said this story will be a sidelined version of cannon, however it will be AU for the majority.

Please R&R, your input is valid. I can't say for certain that I will take all of your suggestions and throw them into the story but comments and criticism is appreciated.

RNG

****DISCLAIMER:**** I will only say this ****ONCE****. I do not own the rights to anything incorporated in this story. Blizzard Entertainment owns the rights to Starcraft, while Bungie owns the rights to Halo. All I will be doing is tinkering with their creations and turning them into what I hope generates a decent story.

**** Date/Location****

'_Thought_'

"Speech"

No Rest for the Weary

Prologue

****/:System:****

**** /:Program: ' Fine del giorno '****

**** /:Initiating****

**** /:Status: Online****

**** /:Loading****

**** Complete****

****2-ERROR-, Decem-ERROR- / ...scanning... location: Unknown Sector****

_ '1557359**999... seconds...'**_

_ '**'2595599.983... min**utes...'**_

_ 'Could you sacri**fice me to c**omp**--**_**ERROR**_**--**ur mis**sion? Could you wat**ch me die? '_

_ '**'15573**60000... s**econds...'**_

_ '**'25956000**... minu**tes...'**_

_ 'I'***ll d**rop a be-_E**RROR**_**--**ut it'll be a **while before anyon**e finds us. Years even...' _

_ '**'1557**3**--**_**ERROR****_**_**_cond__**s...'**_

_ '**'25956**000.016... minu**tes...'**_

****/:System: -ERROR- e: 1534 experiencing critical error****

**** /:Transferring process to Node: 1600****

** /:Transfe-ERROR- de: 1600**
** /: File: Corrupted**
** /:Initiating: back-ups... -ERROR-**
**'25956- ****ERROR****_-...'_**
**'**_**ERROR****_-6**_0003...
secon__**ds...'_**_
/:System:
** /:Program: Terminated**
/:Standby: -

â€|

â€|

"...Damn..."

Static interrupted the disembodied voice as a holographic pedestal hummed to life, sparks erupting from the equipment that had long ago passed the minimum required maintenance. A faint translucent silver haze appeared above the white glowing emitters, quickly coalescing into a light vivid purple hue in the shape of a slender woman.

"Another one bites the dust."

More static laced her soft spoken tone, and to her it was a broken symphony of the damned. Teasing the woman with her likely and soon to come fate.

Silvery symbols trailed over her body as if clothing, outlining the patterns covering her. Though intermittently some of the symbols would flash red, she sighed as she raised her arms looking at the numerical and alphabetical images that covered her 'limbs'. Her projected body blurring in and out of existence as she forcibly removed some of her actual programming, this time one that she had hoped would never fail...

Her sense of time.

"I... hate this." she whispered, it hurt being so helpless, she could barely recall now exactly why she was here and what she was doing...

She could not even remember who she was-

"_Wait_..." the woman slouched down falling to her knees, the numbers and letters scrolling over her body at incredible speeds. "...I **have** a name," the symbols were a blur now. Bringing her hands up to her head she visibly shuddered her image flickering and blurring more than ever before.

Her mouth opened in a silent scream, trillions of processes streaked

through her mind as she desperately searched for the information she was looking for.

"I ****have**** a purpose," her eyes normally a fainter hue the same color as her skin flashed red. More of the once symbols now intricate patterns across her body flashed crimson in blinding pulses, throwing beams of light over the walls.

Illuminating the room.

Something in front of her... a glass covered pod.

Somethin-

No, someone was in th-

_ 'Wake me... when you need me.' _

"UNSC Artificial Intelligence serial number CTN 0452-9..." she spoke to the being in the _capsule,_ her words accompanied with a large sigh of relief. "...Cortana..." the now named A.I. spoke the name in reverence.

The inside of the cyro-pod glowed faintly, a small pattern of lights surrounding its insides and contents. The lone occupant, a green armored behemoth, in front of her was none the wiser to her near breakdown. She studied its inhabitant and as she did her posture relaxed, her shoulders slumped while she slowly stood hopping off of the pedestal and walking towards the pod.

"John..." Cortana whispered the name as if precious as she reached towards the pod trailing her fingers over the glass, her eyes taking in her long time protector for the first time in...

â€| she grimaced, she could no longer calculate the exact time.

_ 'Ar****ound** fi****ve** years?' _

She closed her eyes, shoulders slumping as she gave a sigh.

_ 'That soun****ded** rig****ht**.' _

Slowly opening her eyes Cortana stared silently at the only other occupant aboard the Forward Unto Dawn. A look of concern and contemplation crossing her sharp features.

The Spartan II super soldiers Mjolnir MK VI armor was covered in scrapes scuffs and burns, a testament to the many horrors it had faced in combat. The intimidating polarized golden faceplate, its armored plating was colored a military green. They were thick and angular coated with a refractive layer to better dissipate directed energy weapons the Covenant was know to use. Held in place by a black Titanium Nano-composite Bodysuit, the armor was the pinnacle of UNSC technology costing nearly as much as a Military Warship to build.

It was not the armor that held the concerns of her observations, the wearer was.

Though she could not see him, Cortana knew without a doubt that he

was waiting for her to wake him up when the time came. He had fought through hell and perhaps further then that in the darkness of Installation 00. A bloody rampage against the full might of the Covenant and Flood forces alike, all to retrieve the inde-

'Don't make a girl a promise you can't keep.'

To bring HER back, and he had kept his promise.

"I sure know how to pick them." Cortana said with a smile on her lips giving a forlorn sigh as she watched her hand pass through the glass and disperse. A frown. Her image blurred and red flashed across her form. "It's been a long time." she took a step back and stared at the ceiling, the gunmetal gray panels taunted her with silence _'Still stuck on the Dawn.'_ "Well it looks like you're getting a bit more beauty sleep than we hoped, but if your luck holds true we should be found any day now."

Her laugh sounded hollow even to her ears.

She took a step closer to the pod once more laying her hands upon the glass and leaning against it with her forehead, a body heaving sigh escaping her.

"John, I miss yo-" '_What __**am I doing. He **_**ca**n't_ hear me_.' she huffed crossing her arms below her chest and stepping away from the pod. _'Seems more d__**amage was done to me than I **__thought.'_ she stared at her-

â€| Teammate?

â€| Protector?

â€| Friend?

-in silent contemplation, more red symbols appearing on her body. Shaking her head sadly the woman silently walked back to the console she was loaded into during their escape from Ark. She grimaced as she recalled exactly what had occurred there and with the memories came the torment.

Sergeant Major Avery Johnson betrayed and murdered by 343 Guilty Spark. Ignorant of her surroundings, she never realized the faint crimson lacing her appearance.

'It**'s no**t fair!'

The torture she experienced at the hands of the Gravemind, she shuddered as those memories in particular surfaced. The malevolent coloring spread over her arms and legs, the symbols covering her vanishing slowly.

'**So m**uch... pain.'

The death of Lieutenant Commander Keyes at the hands of the Prophet of Truth. Archaic looking runes began to scroll over her body the crimson coloring seeping throughout.

'So **much... sacr**ifice.'

A roiling tempest of emotion flooded her every nerve. Where was the happy ending? Hadn't they done enough? So much had been expected of them and they had delivered with interest!

'Stranded w**ho the hell knows where! No bac**k-up, rescue, **or support... alone all alone...** again...'

Sparks began to erupt from the console, systems long left inactive coming online the hum of electricity and machinery spread through the room.

'And f**or wha**t!'

The woman span around her face a mask of fury, eyes a smoldering crimson she stalked towards the po-

A series of explosions rumbled throughout the frigate, shaking her out of the Rampancy induced attack. Instantly recalling what just happened, Cortana looked down at her arms as fear coursed throughout her mind... she was far more... damaged than she could have ever guessed. A subtle pinging alerted her to what she had missed opening her mind to the file she quickly read.

/:System: Detected incoming contacts

** /:Designation: Unknown**

** /:Classification: Hostile**

** /:Standby: -**

'T**he h**ell?'

/:System: Hull integrity

** /:Status: Critical damage to sections 1-4**

** /:Automated Response: Sealing blast doors**

** /:Automated Response: Venting residual atmosphere**

** /:Standby: -**

'How did I miss this? I ne**ed to stay in control or** this is going to be BAD...'

/:System: Detected significant orbital decay of current celestial body

** /:Automated Response: Distress call sent**

** /:Trajectory: Current course: Planet fall**

** /:Location: Unknown**

** /:Estimated Time before Impact: 0-ERROR- Hours**

** /:Standby: -**

"Time to wake up an old friend." Cortana vanished in a small blur,

before appearing next to the cryo-tube. With a casual wave of her hand, a series of lights and displays slowly shined to life. Readouts and measurements scrolled alongside familiar data. She leaned bodily against the tube as if embracing it.

She knew nothing could ever come of this... whatever they had. It... hurt, but he had kept his promise to her. The fact that he had given her his word that he would come back to save her had given her the strength to survive the tortures the Gravemind had inflicted upon her. He was her Spartan and they had been through so much together by now that she had no doubts that he would save, instead of all of the known galaxy.

Just her, one more time.

'I missed you, John.'

So lost in her thoughts, Cortana never caught the final message the ship had sent.

/:System: WARNING

** /:Boarding: Detected**

** /:Deck: A**

** /:Status: Compromised**

** /:Deck: B**

** /:Status: Compromised**

** /:Deck: F**

** /:Sta -ERROR-**

** /:Standby: -**

End Prologue

A.N. Keeping it short to see the general opinion, already working on the next chapter. So by my best estimate within a few days, at least that's what I'm hoping for.

Now, this is the combat stats that I have laid out mainly to show a rough standing for John's overall abilities.

These will be from my point of view, because I don't entirely agree with how it was in cannon.

Cannon wise he wasn't the best in much of anything but more of a jack of all trades. It was his 'luck' that made him such an incredible soldier, the books seem to point that out quite a bit. Games do as well.

Though since I've started reading them again I'm starting to agree a bit... I don't think I'd be willing to gamble with him.

I've been having fun with the program thing... stupid as it is, but its entertaining for me. I really find no real reason not to enjoy

myself with the story, so these are going to be in that format. I'm thinking of including Masterchief, Nova, Kerrigan, Jim Raynor, and other characters that will be found in story. Also I would like to say that these are just my opinion and if you have questions on why(s), feel free to ask them.

Scales are 1-10, 10 being the maximum. For comparison sakes lets say 1 is a newborn baby, â€| and a 10 is God mode.

****INDEX****

****/:Accessing File:****

**** /:Security Level: Eyes Only****

**** /:Decrypting****

**** /:Uploading:****

**** /:Transferring****

**** /:Opening File(s):****

**** /:Classified File: Security level X-ray****

**** Subject: Master Chief Petty Officer Sierra-117****

**** Origin: Eridanus II****

**** DOB: est: -/-/2510****

****Status: MIA****

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy**,** a SPARTAN-II commando of the UNSC Naval Special Warfare Command. Referred to simply as Master Chief or Chief, John-117 has although originally trained to combat terrorist and insurrectionist fought on the forefront of nearly every major battle in the Human/Covenant war.

Noted: John-117 was present from the Battle of Chi Ceti to the Battle of Installation 00.

Fitted with the MJOLNIR Powered Assault Armor/Mark IV (**File: Access: Denied**) in November, 2525.

Assigned the UNSC A.I. CTN 0452-9 "Cortana" (**File: Access: Denied**).

Fitted with the MJOLNIR Powered Assault Armor/Mark V (**File: Access: Denied**).

Fitted with the MJOLNIR Powered Assault Armor/Mark VI (**File: Access: Denied**) in October 2552.

Upon recovering the forward section of the _Charon_-class light frigate: Forward Unto Dawn (last known station of duty) no sign of John-117 was found. The Arbiter (**File: 0078234A-1: See attached**) contested reports of the Spartan's demise.

Quoted: "If it were so easy." end quote.

No Further information has been gathered. Listed as MIA, following Spartan protocol, by UNSC Command.

/:File: Combat Analysis

Base Stats

Noted: Not completely accurate for combat situations

Strength: 7

Speed: 7

Intelligence: 7

Combat Stats

Close Quarter Combat: 7

Weapon(s) and Usage: 9

Defense: 6

/:-ALERT-: Unauthorized use of restricted information

** /:Terminating File**

** /:Program Terminated**

2. Lost Sheep

**A.N. **So here we go first chapter we'll be introducing some of the OC's in this one, should be fun. I'm amazed to say that within 12 hours of posting this I got a review.

Thanks.

Doing a bit for answering questions and the like, or just my comments/thoughts on your reviews in this section.

Starcraft is awesome ~ Tech stuff isn't all that big an issue, seeing as all that I plan on giving the Chief UNSC wise is what he can salvage from the Dawn (and it's fun stuff). This story is taking place in the SC universe so he's going to have to get used to the new weapons and everything else. Also, the Chief has an obscene amount of training and experience; a GUN in anyone's hands is dangerous, but ANY weapon in Chief's hands is deadly. I'll be sure to not overpower anything the best I can.

That was a bit of a rant, but I felt it necessary. Seeing as I want this story to be accurate as possible, your review was very welcome. Thanks.

I am currently in need of a beta, if you are familiar with the aspects of game play and lore behind them. Please feel free to pm me if your interested in the job.

Also because its a massive pain in the ass being overly descriptive for outfits and the like I won't be obscenely in depth in their descriptions. I will give an idea and dig into it a bit but not for everything.

Sadly I'm already raising the rating to M because of dialogue.

Lastly, please realize that I am attempting to meld two insanely popular games together (although SC: Ghost was not released the SC franchise is massive). There is no feasible way for me to make everyone happy, I can only hope to appease the masses with what is my best effort.

RNG

****Chapter I****

Lost Sheep**
>

****Koprulu Sector****

****Mar Sara System â€" Terran Dominion****

****20 Kilometers SSW of Vespene Refinery DF 113-8****

****0845 Hours****

"Hey Sarge," The marine, markings on his suits armor over his left breast showing him to be a Private First Class. Erik Smith, she was pretty sure that was his name, was waving their XO over to him.
"check this out."

The ghost turned curiously towards the teams communication officer, noting the standard orange CMC-300 armor. The man was standing besides a terminal they had set up earlier an advanced communications relay, far from the normal platforms most groups were deployed with.

It had been that fact that had drawn her attention.

Most likely it held some form of tracking device in case they lost track sight of her.

"Wha'cha go' thur Erik?"

She silently scoffed at the thought, leaning back against the earthen wall of the valley they set up in. The ghost shook her head tossing the long blonde locks that were not held in place by her helmet over her shoulder then gave a brief glance at the marines, all five of them having gone over to see what Erik had found before going back to the C-20A Canister Rifle that rested on her thighs. Her fingers and eyes checking over the weapon to make absolutely sure that it would work perfectly.

Though it had checked out the last twenty odd times, with Zerg forces on the ground there was no such thing as being too careful.

"Dunno Sarge. It's a transmission of some kind..." Erik turned back

to his station, fingers nimbly flying over the normal sized keys with a skill and speed that should not have been possible with his armored hands. "Some crazy loop, it ain't from us though never heard of thi-"

"Lemme hurr th' damn thang soldier," Roy "Sarge" Kepps rumbled out, his voice a deep baritone drawl. Standing a good foot over most of his men, his armor was battered in comparison to theirs. A testament to him having survived long enough on the battlefield to have earned them. "I don' go' time fo ya techno babble."

"Yes sir!"

Random bits of noise, a local Blues channel, talk radio, talk radio, static, Dominion Public Access... Then nothing except garbled words laced heavy with static that brought everyone's, even the normally apathetic ghost's attention to the speakers. A woman's, no mistaking the speakers gender... not with that smooth silky tone. It was faint, a slowly increasing whisper but with the decay so broken hardly a word came through.

"_**...-his is U.N...- Frigate Forwa... -awn. We are under att-...-o any U.N.S.C. ves-...-requesting immediate assi-..."**_

One of the marines slapped Erik on the back of his helmet, knocking him forward and forcing him to grab hold of the equipment to keep his heavy armor from falling prey to gravity. The signal was lost cutting off the voice emanating from the speakers. He growled slamming a fist upside the console then span to face the one who hit him an with an angry scowl pasted on his face. "The hell was that for Rookie?" he growled.

The ghost turned away in distaste, this "Rookie" had already proven earlier to be an idiot in her eyes aboard the Assault Dropship Thunderfury. Disrespecting military protocol like that on a mission, though she supposed it could do with being more testosterone then synapses. Most rookie marines were. She rolled her eyes at the thought and turned back to what was occurring, even if it was only to get the names for their tombstones. As a second thought she added to the notes that the Rookies name was Lester.

"Yer givin us garbage," Rookie grinned revealing a gap where one of his front teeth had been knocked out the sight made all the more comical by the lopsided black paint on his cheeks. "I know ya can make the pretty lady sound better then that."

The other men chuckled while Erik rolled his eyes then turned to the machine. He slammed his fist down on top of the monitors, bent closer for a moment then turned back around to face the rest of his squad. "Here you go boys, she's workin fine and proper now." he grinned while spinning a dial on the board.

"_**I repeat... This is the Forward Unto Dawn. We are under attack by unknown hostiles. To any vessels within this sector, requesting immediate assistance." **_there was nearly ten seconds worth of silence, then **_"I repeat... This is-"_**

A half-assed salute accompanied the grin "Tha's all she wrote Sarge." Erik chuckled while he spun the dial again, lowering the volume.

The ghost cocked a brow at that, to her the message seemed far too short... for a distress call at least, nothing except a name? Pretty bare bones...

"Wha'dya thank thurr Arms?" Sarge asked as he faced his men, a frown on his face.

"Not our problem." Vlad "Arms" Kuznetsov was the Heavy Weapons Expert and overall second in command of the unit. A Massive Russian who somewhere in his ancestry must have included a grizzly bear. The pair of SGM-4 "Hawker" short range missile packs he carried strapped to his back in addition to the C-14 "Impaler" in his arms gave him an eternally hunched over appearance, even though he was the tallest member of their group. "Could be pirates." He smiled as he spoke bringing his gun up and pulling back the charging handle with a sharp crack

One of the marines chuckled, at least it sounded that way. Stepping forward as his helmet's faceplate painted with a white skull motif raised. A billowing cloud of acrid purple haze erupting from the seal as it opened, a pair of blood shot blue eyes seeming to glow from within. "Don't worry bout missing a chance for yer toys Arms, we got plenty to worry bout with the Zerg." his voice was gravelly as if he had just finished coughing for an extended duration.

Rookie laughed and slapped the marine on his back, "Zerg ain't gonna have much to say when-" only to squawk in indignation when the man spun around and socked him in the chest knocking him onto his back. "The fuck was that for Jerry!"

The man squat down on his haunches resting his arms on his knees until his face was directly above Rookie's. "Listen up Meat, and you better listen good..." Jerry wheezed and coughed hard, then spat a dirty green wad onto Rookie's pristine armor. "Them Zerg are a monster of nightmare, they don't care if it's man, woman, or child..." he drew a wicked looking knife from its sheath attached to his breastplate resting its blade against the now pale mans cheek. "They'll cut them up and hang em outside their parents homes by their entrai-"

"Stan' down thurr marine!"

Though Sarge had shouted the words, it was a different member of the group who acted. With the visor still in place his features were indistinguishable, but the firm arm on Jerry's shoulder seemed to halt all momentum to his manic rant.

The final member of the platoons armor was different from the rest of the groups, a specialist. His armor carried less actual plating swapping it for extra boosters and a set of jump jets, allowing him better mobility and movement than his more heavily guarded counterparts. On his back a menacing BOSUN FN92 Sniper rifle and covering the chest plate, massive 50 caliber rounds hung in bandoliers strapped for form an X.

Jerry growled and turned his menacing gaze towards the man who had stopped him. Scary as his glare was when the mans faceplate opened those dead black eyes staring back at him unnerved him more than he cared to admit. Shrugging the hand off his shoulder Jerry stood and stomped away throwing his blade far into the darkness surrounding

them. "I gotta go get that, can't lose what our loving Dominion gave us after all..." with a grunt he was gone.

The silent sniper offered Rookie a hand, who respectfully did not offer the one he had just used to wipe the spit off of his armor and into the dirt below him.

"Thanks Ryu." Rookie muttered as he was pulled back onto his feet. The man only stared at him an eerie looking smile on his lips, never reaching anywhere near his eyes. Dusting off his armor he glared in the direction Jerry had headed. "Fuck is his problem?" he muttered.

He nearly toppled once more when Arm's placed a heavy hand on his shoulder, and as Rookie turned to the weapons expert the look in the big mans eyes told him to keep his trap shut.

"Jerry a gud man, Rookie." Sarge cut in shutting his faceplate once more and turned to Erik. "I ne' ya to ke' watchin them channels, until we ge' call'd in by Cap'n Buck we wait."

"Yes sir!" Erik gave a sharp salute and dutifully went back to doing what had started this whole charade.

"Arms! Take Rookie wi' ya an set up a perimeter."

A feral grin spread across Arms face the pearly white teeth visible in the darkness of his helmet, in a swift movement one of his rocket launchers appeared in his hands while his rifle rested in its place on his back. He cradled the massive four barreled missile launcher in his arms like a mother would a baby. "Lock..." his helmet sealed shut and from the external speakers his accent laden voice finished with "N' Load."

With a casual wave to Rookie, the pair walked off into the darkness. Rookie having already gathered the sensitive equipment they would be using for the perimeter.

Given no orders, Ryu seemed to fade back into the long mid day shadows coming from the valleys landscape. More than likely to find a suitable perch to snipe from.

With a grunt Sarge turned to the ghost and gave a small salute that was returned, before he walked over to the pile of munitions they had been granted for their mission. Just an hour earlier Captain Buck, the commanding officer of all the Dominion ground forces on planet had walked right into a kill zone. The majority of the men and women under his command had been overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the Zerg.

Their orders were originally to back up the Captain, those had been changed by High Command, and on paper it would be easier to have just called it suicide with a flourish. Now instead of providing support to the main forces. When the Captain called for the next assault they were to complete a full on infiltration of whatever the hell appeared where **DF 113-8** had been. With the now known massive number of Zerg forces in the area, their job had them smack dab in the middle of the enemy hot zone.

Though hopefully for them, Captain Buck would provide a suitable

distraction.

The ghost glided silently over the terrain and peered over Erik's shoulder, a small smile on her lips. So unaware of his surrounding she could slit his neck and he would not know it until his head lay on the ground. She closed her eyes, shaking the thoughts from her mind and gave a small cough to get his attention.

"Excuse me." She smiled beneath the mask of her hostile environment suit as the man whirled around, eyes wide while at the same time bringing his weapon up aiming it directly at her stomach. "Sorry..." she added without a single trace of sincerity.

"Ma'am! It's ok jus-"

"Startled you? I know."

"How did yo-"

She tapped the side of her mask the numerous gadgets and instruments throwing a faint glow around her head like a halo.

Though she would admit to being no angel.

"Ghost, remember?"

The marines back snapped ruler straight as he saluted, "Yes Ma'am!" he barked. Looks like Erik was one of the marines that actually believed in some of the rumors floating around about ghosts.

"May I take a look at that last message?" She asked, subtly moving herself in front of the console while at the same time forcing Erik away from the station.

"But Ma' -"

"Don't worry, I'll let your Sergeant know why you aren't here."

The man hesitated throwing a concerned look at his station then back to her though weariness filled his gaze when he directed it towards her. "Ma'am I can't in good conscience leave my station unattended, I'v -"

The ghost gave his mind a gentle shove, being extremely careful not to overwhelm him and literally boil his brain in his skull. "Trust me, I'll be done before you know it."

A light glaze appeared in the mans eyes and his jaw slackened, with a nod he trod away from the communications center. Though seeing as she hadn't given him an order he only stood stupidly staring into space several feet away with his back to her.

It would have to work.

Pulling a cord from her helmet she wired herself directly into the network, bringing up the distress call again. It repeated once more and she frowned. It just sounded and felt like something was missing to her and she always trusted her gut feelings on things like this. She ran it through a built in decryption suite installed in her helmet, waiting several moments before a small green light appeared

in her HUD. Opening the newly made file she noted that of all things the static had been the encoding that held this hidden message. She listened carefully as the woman's voice once again rang through her ears.

"_**This is U.N.S.C. Artificial Intelligence CTN 0452-9, currently aboard the U.N.S.C. Frigate Forward Unto Dawn. To any U.N.S.C. Forces in range too receive this transmission we are in a unknown sector and need pick-up, Sierra-117 is in the freezer. Repeat Sierra-117 is in the freezer. We have unknown hostiles boarding the ship, any attempts at rescue operations proceed with caution. We will be making planet fall within five Kilometers of 45° 5' 5" N / 93° 0' 35" W on the fourth planet of this system within the hour. I repeat... This is U.N.-"*_

'_Those co-ordinates sound familiar..._' The ghost closed her eyes trying to remember exactly why they- her eyes snapped open and she brought up her wrist checking the GPS, setting a way point she scoffed. Their LZ was only a few kilometers off of her current location, and if a ship crashed in the area... it would be swarming with Zerg almost the instant it finished cooling from atmospheric reentry.

Meaning by default there location would most likely be overrun as well.

"Dammi-"

"Problem?"

The woman spun around a switch blade already in her hands ready to lash out only to come face to face with Ryu, his disturbing smile and dead gaze seemed to claw at her soul.

'How the hell did he sneak up on me like that...' "No, no problem." she muttered trying to figure out just what made this man tick. His mental shields were obscenely strong for a front line soldier most of them being so doped up on Stim packs they could barely differentiate a butter knife from a bayonet. She gave him an unseen grin from behind her mask, "How'd you sneak up on me like that?" she asked truthfully curious.

The man cocked his head to the side, the smile spreading further across his face yet still not reaching his eyes. "Why miss November Annabella Terra, that would be telling."

Her eyes widened and she grabbed the man by his armor simultaneously bringing up her knife to rest against his jugular. "How do you know that name!" she hissed.

Though it seemed impossible his smile spread even wider.

"Now November-"

"DON'T CALL ME THAT!"

"Then," he chuckled "what should I call you."

Pulling the weapon away from the mans throat she twirled the blade around flashing its razor shard edges in the morning sun. "November

Terra is dead. " she growled "I'm Agent X41822N of the Terran Dominion. I don't want to be anybody else." she stalked away her breathing growing more rapid, her emotional state was unstable. This would be very bad if she did not calm down. If she could not calm herself down manually it would mean she would need a dose of her _medicine_... and she hated the stuff with a passion.

She had more important things to do than to stew in the past and what was left of her fragmented memories. The most important now being alerting the Sergeant to the newest dilemma being thrown onto their plates.

"You never told me what to call you."

She paused, stopping in place and looking briefly over her shoulder.

"Call me Nova."

****UNSC Frigate Forward Unto Dawn****

"_...-ke u-..._"

A pair of groggy eyes slowly opened, slamming shut at the bright lights flashing before them. Then after a split second, courageously opened once more taking in the surroundings. HUD, health monitors and displays, the all to clean air, his helmet... Lights outside, flashing reds and blues intermittently, he could hear sirens.

"_...-d you-..._"

A familiar burning sensation across his bo- _'Cryo. Went in after the Ark.'_ -he grimaced and took in a steady breath. Only to exhale sharply with a silent grunt as agony shot from his unused lungs, blossoming out spreading a torrent of pure misery throughout his body. Almost as bad as when he was stabbed with a plasm-

"_Wak-...-p!_"

Voices, who? Damn, a combat situa- FOCUS! Thick glass covered him, yet he was still in his armor, wh- _'Oh yeah, cyro.'_ must have been for a long time... he felt starved, weak, sl- FOCUS! Adrenaline tore through him alighting his senses with fire. His body nearly several feet and four hundred pounds of pure muscle perfected for war and destruction came alive, ...FOCUS! The pain he felt coursing through his veins like molten fire was forgotten. Muscles unused for so long flexed taunt, ready for anything.

Time slowed, his thoughts sharpened and he entered a sense of calm he was all to familiar with.

Spartan time.

"I need you, John!"

'_Cortana._'

He chinned the control for his helmet lights, they flared against the

screen of smoke filling his tube. The illumination throwing ghastly shadows as he slammed his gauntlet covered palms against the glass throwing it from his view as he leaped forward. Drifting, weightless in the zero-g of space, through the air towards the pedestal where he spotted Cortana. He halted his forward momentum by gripping the console with his hands bringing himself to a stop in front of her.

"I'm her-"

"No time Chief, get us the hell out of here!"

...Odd.

He had never been one to question her when she said that something needed to be done. However, something seemed wrong. '_She could be rampant._' the thought flashed through his mind, if it was true she would be a more danger than help to whatever the situation really was. He would have to get ri- '_No._'

John stared at the constru- '_woman'_ he mentally corrected with a sense of unease, the closest thing a Spartan felt to fear. Something about her was... _off_. His eyes flitted over her body, some of her coloring was different than what he remembered. The symbols that were utilized for her clothing had changed, they weren't as clean cut as they use to be... more feral... aggressive... she was shifting around bodily with what looked to be a sense of desperation, never focusing on a singular spot as if trying to pierce the walls with her gaze.

She span around narrowing her eyes at him hand on her hip in a pose he recognized instantly, impatience.

"Did you _hear_ me caveman?" she nearly, he felt his eyes widen, _hissed_ _and if it were not for his augmented eyesight he would never have caught the brief crimson flash of her eyes. "We need to get the hell off of the Da-"

"Are you alright, Cortana?" John asked, his voice although slightly altered by his suit speakers came out in a soft gravelly rumble. He watched as her eyes widened and she crossed her arms over her chest... in a defensive manner, almost as if she were attempting to shrink into nothingness. "What's wrong?"

"N-nothing..." she gave him a small smile... even that seemed off. "I'm fine, it's been a long time John." she continued giving him look that he could not read the meaning to. "I can fill you in on the details later. Right now thoug-"

"Are you rampa-"

"**NO!**"

Her small form shimmered, and static was present in her words. This could not be good, if she was rampant he would not have a choice and would have to followâ€|. Protocol. That pained him far more than any wound he had ever suffer-

"Do you trust me?"

Her voice tore him from his thoughts, John crouched down so he could look at her at eye level. He had been asked that same question before once in his life. At that time he had been able to answer without a second thought... after several seconds of his silent stare he gave her a subtle nod.

"What's the situation?"

"Something threw off our course and now we're on a crash course with a planet. No clue where we are scans haven't been helpful at all with that." she shrugged "It's been years John, with the gravitational drift and decay it was bound to happen sooner or later."

"How many years has it been since the Ark?" his gut was telling him only bad news would accompany his question. "How are you still active?"

"Last I checked its been five years now John." her voice was hesitant, the whisper she had spoken the words seemed pained even. "I've been keeping myself on standby, waking up every year near its end to make sure we're st-"

A rumble shook the ship and John gripped the podium to keep from being thrown into the air. He turned so his polarized visor was nary an inch from the emitters, head cocked slightly in silent question.

"We've been boarded, they d-"

She wasn't able to finish as John forcibly uploaded her into his neural link, he could figure out exactly what was going on with her later. Priorities had been given and even though his gut screamed at him to make sure Cortana was not compromised, not allowing her or himself to be taken by the enemy was a much larger factor and the safest place for her was in the suit.

'_Though why she wouldn't mention hostiles first..._' He shook his head dismissing the thought, he could worry more later.

A sharp spike of pain erupted from the back of his head only to evaporate into the cool almost liquid sensation of Cortana getting comfortable in his mind. It was disturbing, though he had become used to it after the many years the pair had spent together. Having another presence share his mind was still... weird.

"_Wel**l I see you manne**rs haven't improved."_

He gave a grunt, pushing off the floor and floating towards a M90 CAWS that was nearby. Grabbing the shotgun in his right hand he watched the helmet mounted displays as his suit connected with the weapon and gave a small frown when on his HUD it showed the weapon to be nearly empty.

"What can you tell me?" his eyes scanned the surrounding area, a nearly empty weapon without at least a M6G to fall back onto not exactly the best situation. The Cyro-bay was empty of any weapons, seems that even a shotgun was a blessing.

A small screen in the corner of his helmet lit up showing him what he could only assume to be a video feed taken from somewhere in the

ship. A three dimension figure burst to life and he studied it carefully. The- he could not form a name for the bipedal creature, it was colored a dirty purple hue with flecks of red and orange spread over its entire body. Its head nearly canine in appearance with a malformed muzzle and a large gaping maw filled with hundreds of needle like teeth, glowing red eyes in sunken sockets. They had three webbed toes on the end of each powerful looking back leg, the muscles of which seemed disproportionate to its size. A short stumpy tail with wicked looking spikes coming from its rear, armored looking plates covering the creatures backside along with two blade covered arms seeming to sprout from its spine and protruding from below its head a pair of arms ending in scythe-like claws.

"What is th-

"_They aren't huma**n... that's certain, I've never seen th**__ese things in any o**f the Covenant or**__ UNSC databases."_ a pause. _"They see**m more like animals tha**__n anything else, I've been venting the left over atmosphere from section**s of the Dawn they've**__ taken over." _she gave a brief laugh. "_They are NO**T completely immune to the eff**__ects of vacuum bu**t can survive it fo**__r short periods of time."_

More explosions rumbled throughout the ship, by his estimates at the opposite end from where he was.

"_... I think they're go**ing for the engines, as a last resort I hav**__e the reactors ready to red-line."_ she answered his question before he could ask. _"We don't hav**__e much time before they breach the b**__ulkheads, __with**__ the damage the ship took during the bat**__tle of the Ark my options are limited to slow __**them down. A lot of th**__e ships systems are dead."_

"Got a plan?"

Her light laughter seemed to echo throughout his mind, _"Wh**y are you ask**__ing me?" _she drawled before another pause which worried him slightly, it was almost as if she were trying to deflect his attention to the situation instead of on her. She was fairly outspoken and normally she would have given numerous plans and contingencies just as crazy as anything he could think up. _"Yours are so m**uch more entertaini**__ng."_

"We head to the armory..." John grumbled taking a quick look at the weapon in his hands, trained eyes noting that even with how beat up it looked it should still work as its designers intended. He had no doubts it would serve him well, but a little back-up never hurt. "After that we find a way off the Dawn."

"_No worries right? Not t**he first time this has happen**ed."_ her tone was back to the playful undertones he was so used to. It brought him a sense of ease. _"Gonna sho**ot your way out or **mix it up a little?"_

"Think I'll be making it up as I go this time."

"_You have about an ho**ur before we enter the atmosphere, I'd r**ecommend finding a way off the ship before that happens."_ she explained to him. _"Wit**h the structural damage to the ship, I calculate our chances of su**rviving the imp**act in the realm** of

17 percent."_

Good he had a time frame.

Activating the magnetic soles of his boots, he pushed gently off the ceiling landing without a sound as he came in contact with the floor. Squaring his shoulders as he brought the weapon up to the ready the Spartan moved towards the sealed blast door leading towards the rest of the ship.

"_So, you rea**dy to greet the welcoming com**mittee?"_

There was no satisfying clack in the silent vacuum of space accompanying the shell being rammed into the chamber as he pumped the shotgun in his hands.

"Yeah."

End Chapter I

A.N. This chapter introduced a few of the OC's, mainly the marines that Nova was deployed with. I'm taking a few days to draw up character bios for them since I don't plan on them being sacrificial lambs, I think it would be fun to tinker around with them a bit. As a note the only one that I didn't name is Lester, at least that's what I'm pretty sure his name is. Go watch the SC: Ghost cinematic on youtube if you want to check but that's where I got it from. I hope that the cast is well thought out and I'm going to do my best with character development. Though I'm taking creative license with all of them and doing as I please.

The majority of the Tech mentioned is authentic to the SC universe. Only Ryu's armor and Arms rocket launchers are of my own creation (at least to my knowledge). For an idea on what the rocket launchers look like go check out a RPG-32 and imagine that with 4 tubes in a box formation.

Next chapter we start hitting the action.

I burnt myself out a bit so I'll be posting the next part of the index next chapter. Nova will be its star.

RNG

3. Don't Rock the Boat

A.N. First of all I need to ask if anyone else is having trouble logging in. Sometimes it works for me sometimes it wont, and it's annoying as hell. Help with that would be great.

Now we enter a bit of action, hopefully this will put everyone's worries to rest, and if it doesn't well I'm not forcing you to read the story. Many of you didn't like how the Chief only picked up a M90A last chapter. He is still on the Dawn, therefore only U.N.S.C. (and a bit of Covenant) tech is available.

Now then, it's been brought to my attention that a lot of people are assuming that I'm going to "Nerf" the Master Chief's armor to be balanced.

/lol

That's not in my plans. For this story I'm really looking in depth for comparable weaponry in each of the games as well as their respective cannon references, and from there trying to incorporate things with a unbiased view and not my own opinions.

Which means that Chief is going to be the badass he really is, that's a given. However he won't be godly.

Chapters are going to be around 5-8k words in length from here on out. At least that's how it's looking.

Apologies for this lateness of this post... well, to be honest I don't recall saying I'll be posting this according to a schedule.

This chapter was brought to you by Evangelion 2.22 You Can (Not) Advance, which by the way if you haven't seen it and are a fan of the series: it's quite good. Anyways, at least that's what I was watching while I wrote this... sadly the movie ended and now it's being brought to you by my itunes play list.

I have nothing more to say, enjoy.

RNG

Chapter II

Don't Rock the Boat

****Forward Unto Dawn****

_-**it's fascinat****__**ing, that the Forerunner's w****ere** only what they considered to be ****__**a Tier I technologic****al** race."****_** Cortana continued her latest speech. Since she seemed to have calmed down the A.I. had become awfully talkative. More so than John could ever recall her being. Rambling on about every piece of information she had examined and or cataloged during his time in the freezer.

"Okay."

In fact he was more worried now than before, having noticed earlier that his mission timer was not active on his heads-up display. When asked, Cortana had given a near instant response of it being damaged during the escape from the Ark but he could clearly remember it working when he had slipped her into the terminal when he entered cryo-sleep. As well as when she had been disconnected from the system and the suits programming took over.

What was she trying to hide from him?

"_The data points to muc****h** of their scientific achievement being derived from a race ev****__**en more advanced tha****n** themselves. Much like ****__**the Covenant."**_** she explained, her voice filling his helmet.

"Right."

Also, though he had not brought it to her attention that he had checked it before uploading her into the MJOLNIR once more... It had been five years.

Why would she lie to him?

He mentally shook his head, he knew why... rampancy. The word left a sour taste in his mouth and caused the most unfamiliar feeling to crawl up his spine. Something he could not identify for the life of him, but it was a cold dark feeling that he would rather forget.

'It's nothing... she's the same old Cortana.' the thought of denial escaped him and John silently cursed. She wasn't able to entirely read his thoughts, although she did interface directly with his brain, but she had a scary sense of intuition when it came to guessing what was on his mind.

"_**What**'s the matter Chie**f?**"_

There was a reason why he tended to answer her verbally.

"Nothing, you were saying?" he buried the previous thoughts deep within his subconscious, he could ask her about it later. When their lives weren't on the line.

The last hundred meters John just traveled had been some of the slowest moving in his long career. A distance he could cover in seconds at a full sprint, the need for stealth had taken all priority so far. With the enemy being unknown he had no idea of what he was facing, and with only a handful of shells available for his weapon he would rather avoid them for now. Having been moving in the dark for so long he risked a few precious seconds activating the lights on his helmet, illuminating the hall in front of him.

Clear.

Though he had near perfect night vision thanks to his augmentations, John knew better than to leave the full scope of navigating to his eyes and the sensors in the Mjolnir. The light helped to clear some of the finer details and although it did not reveal groundbreaking information, it made visually determining his position aboard the Dawn much easier.

"_Well, alright... an__**yways about what **__I was saying, that's m__**y theory based off the**__ data from th__**e Ark **__that I've gathered__**."**_

"Uh huh."

Cutting the lights he continued stealthily stalking down the hall. Keeping a wary eye on his HUD's sensors.

"_**So I think that these,** "Precursors" as the Forerunner'**s called the**m... Chief? Chief, are you even list**ening to me?"**_

He'd been lending half a ear to what was being said by Cortana thus far, her spacy disposition at this time was not suitable for combat.

Thus, he had yet to grant her the benefit of his full attention. "Most of the time?" John replied as he came to a stop leaning back against a bulkhead, according to the nav. beacon they were only another fifty meter's the Forward Unto Dawn's auxiliary armory.

Unfortunately she was a all-in or bust kind of girl, and made her distaste of being ignored known.

"_...alr**ight caveman. So you know, it's r**ude to ignore a lady **when she's talking to you**."_

Unable to miss the amused tone in her voice, John felt a small smile stretch across his lips at Cortana's playful snipe. This was the Cortana he was used to. He could almost see her hologram now, hand on hip head tilted to one side as she rolled her eyes at him. Having spent as much time as they had fighting side by side, he knew that the A.I. was a bit on the eccentric side. In fact he found their banter a great form of stress relief.

Sweeping the barrel of the shotgun back and forth as he crept through the dark halls John allowed himself a small chuckle, "Yes Ma'am."

The A.I. gave an unladylike snort at his cheek. "_Sooo,"_she drew the last syllable out like a purr. _**"yo**u fee**ling nostal**gic yet?"_

"Yes," he replied, the half ton of his armored form made nary a sound as it glided through the corridor like a green ghost. Sweeping the weapon in his hands back and forth ready for an ambush. "but it's not the good kind."

"_**Aww," **_Cortana cooed**_ "did somebody wa**_ke up on the wrong side of their c__**ryo-pod?"**_

John reached up and lightly smacked the side of his helmet. _**"Alright big guy, ser**__ious faces n__**ow." **_Cortana laughed, _**"I'm readi**__ng several conta__**cts ahea**__d, twenty meters out a__**t 3 o'clock."**_

The Chief quickly ducked down a hallway to his left crouching down behind a bulkhead that extended into the corridor. There he remained still as a statue watching as a group of the same creatures he had seen on his helmet displays in the cyro-bay stalk past his position hidden in the shadows.

They had managed to avoid them for the most part, sticking to sneaking through maintenance corridors for the majority of the trip to the armory. John tensed when the one closest to him turned its ugly head towards him, seeming to sniff at the air. It growled lowly at its companions halting the five of them in place. The one who growled John assumed was the leader, since it continued to bark and chirp at its fellows and they appeared to pay rapt attention.

"_Amazing, they seem to__** have some rudime**__ntary form of communication!"_ Cortana chirped excitedly, _**"Though it's a hostile first contact situation, we've found anot**__her species outside of Humanity and the Covenant forces that__** is space-faring!**__"

He fought the urge to groan at her observations.

Leave it to her to want to research the latest xenomorphs they had come across and ignore the fact that this group had boarded their ship and was currently tearing it apart. Let alone ignore the fact that within an hour the ship that they were on was going to collide with a planet in a flaming ball of twisted metal.

Cortana and himself still had not been able to agree on a name, though some of the idea's thrown out had been entertaining. Their numbers so far had been few, however... they were swarming around like small packs of rabid dogs, and if he were to guess based off just how they looked the creatures were vicious at close range.

Nearly a full minute passed before the leader of the pack of creatures seemed to have lost interest in his hiding place. Turning from the corridor after a short series of growls, clicks, and chirps the pack continued on in the direction they were previously headed.

Counting to thirty before moving, John poked his head around the corner looking down the corridor that they group had gone. Seeing no trace of them and nothing coming up on the sensors he stepped out into the hall and continued towards the armory.

"_**Fasci**nating! Maybe they're frie**ndly an**d are just looking for** salvage?" **_Cortana continued branching out into a new topic.**_ "After all, the_**_ video feeds for the Dawn c__**an't pick** up audi**o... if I had enough time perh**aps I could figure out a way to communica**te with them a-"**_

John cut her off softly, "I doubt that Cortana." he wasn't biased in his opinion. The fact remained that he had spent nearly the entire duration of the past thirty years fighting against aliens for the survival of the human race. His distrust was entirely merited.

"_Are yo**u trying to say that I **couldn't prod**uce the softw**are?" _she snapped_ "I'll have you know that your talking to the woma**n who helped deco**de nearly eighty percent of the Engli**sh to Covenant language bar-"**_

"I meant about them being friendlies." he hadn't forgotten about how proud she was of her abilities. "I do not think they are planni-"

"_Just be**cause all the races in the Covenan**t were hostile doesn't mean that every alien race out there is looking** to eliminate the h**uman species!" _she vehemently retorted,_ "F**or all we k**now this could be a giant misunderstanding and if you massacre the**ir groups on the Dawn we can damn well expect them to BECOME hostile!"**_

John was taken aback by her reply, and the outburst further proved to him that she was either becoming rampant or already was. The cold chill crept up his spine again, but he forced it down. Deciding to reply to her outburst with fact, giving credence to he had said.

"Weren't you saying earlier that you had been venting the atmosphere in sections they had taken over?" John pointed out. "I'm sure that by now we have been labeled a threat from that. Also they knocked out our auxiliary generators, clearly a boarding action."

The A.I. went silent, remaining that way as he continued to trudge down the hall, sticking close to the walls.

He checked the nav. point on his HUD once more, only a quarter of an hour had passed since he had been quick thawed and they were nearly to the armory located a couple floors below them. John flashed his lights again and headed down a hall to his left. Turning to one of the closed bulkhead doors he studied it for a second before looking to his left and right making sure nothing was in sight. Taking a quick look of at his helmets scanners confirmed that nothing was in range. His right hand shot out, armored fingers shaped like a spear digging into the crack where the door sealed against the wall itself, though the armored steel was made to withstand small arms fire and explosive decompression it was not designed to stop a veteran Spartan II super soldier.

A dull thump echoed throughout the hall. Flexing his fingers around the edge of the door inside the opening that had been made he looked around once more before pulling, setting the magnetic soles of his boots to maximum he tugged at the door, the hydraulic systems holding it closed began to budge. Pushing his other hand into the now widened opening he pulled again, it slid once more but still far slower than he liked. Even with the microgravity setting they were in it seemed that because of the decompression throughout most of the Forward Unto Dawn's aft section everything was in lock down. Add in the deteriorating conditions and lack of maintenance,

As the door opened fully, John ducked down into a crouch minimizing his silhouette while swinging the shotgun off of his back and onto his right shoulder. Though scanners showed all clear, he knew better than to rely to heavily upon equipment and to trust what he could see personally. His keen eyes swept the area, finding none of the aliens present he fluidly stood up and moved down the hall.

His long time companions silence was starting to get to him, usually she would have come back at him by now with a snippy comment.

"Cortana, ar-"

"_So**rry," **_She interrupted before he could finish._** "I don't **know what c**ame over me."**_ her words were surprisingly hesitant, as if she were taking exceptional care to say the words._** "Yo**u're right though... I'**m just not think**ing clearly."_

Now she just sounded pained.

John wanted to help her, she had his back in the many times they had faced the perils of war. As he had done for her. However, now there were no enemies for him to shoot. No planets he needed to save. No creature of nightmare to save her from. The fact that he did not know how to help her right now bothered him to a degree he could not understand.

It also frustrated him to no end.

The silence that had settled between them was palpable now, unsure of

what to say he began to try and get the normally cheerful woman to open up a bit and tell him what was wrong. "Is there anything I can-

"_Ch__**ief on yo**__ur si__**x, compan**__y!_"

Time seemed to slow before Cortana even finished her words, a all to familiar sense of calm bathing the Spartan II commando. Due to the overall synergy of the many augmentations done to his body, when adrenaline coursed through his system it increased his reaction time to mere milliseconds. Compounded with the MJOLNIR armor that time was reduced to near instantaneous.

There was no real scientific name for it, but for his brother and sister Spartans it was endearingly referred to as.

Spartan time.

John activated his lights and span around on his heel, bringing the M90 CAWS to bear on the closest of the incoming threats in the same motion. A pair from the group earlier had doubled back and found him, he could not tell for certain since the creatures appearances were so similar. A feeling in his gut however, assured him that he was correctly analyzing how the situation occurred.

The creatures screeched battle cries and the one on the right charged towards him. The serrated blades on its front limbs and the wicked pair of scythes that it had sprouting from its back flailing in the air, their edges glinting in the beams of his helmet lights glare.

He swung the shotgun up his arms moving in a blur, bracing it against his right shoulder he lined up a shot dead center on the nearest beast. Waiting until it was in the weapons optimum range he pressed down on the trigger on-

Cortana's voice stalled him at the last second, "_Save yo__**ur ammo Ch**__ief!" _instantly he switched tactics. In a single fluid motion he placed the shotgun onto the magnetic clips on the back of his armor and hunkered down, lowering his center of gravity.

The one who had been milliseconds from being introduced to a face full of eight gauge buckshot made a leaping lunge towards him. With a screech that stung at his eardrums the beast brought its bladed front limbs down slashing at his chest.

He sidestepped faster than eyes could track armored right hand shooting out and gripping the creatures left limb sprouting from its back like a vice. Shouldering the it against the bulkhead to immobilize the beast, it gave a startled sounding squawk as it struggled in his grip as his left palm surged forward against what he assumed was the joint.

Though John could feel the powerful muscle corded within the creatures limb straining against him to escape. It was unable to withstand the full strength behind arms capable of flipping a three metric tonne "Warthog" all-terrain vehicle end over end. The limb snapped backwards with a sound similar to dry timber being split, a horrible pained screech erupting from the beasts maw.

Its other limbs pivoted towards him clawing at the air trying to reach him. Pulling on the broken arm he wrenched his hand spinning it in place in a torquing motion, stressing the wound further than the creatures available range of movement. Twisting even further a wet crackle echoed in the air as the ligaments began to tear, the creature attempted to compensate by crouching down its other bladed arms flailing in the air trying to reach him. Thick mucus like slobber being thrown across into the air and onto the bulkheads around them as it ferociously shook its head, trying to twist its neck into a proper position to reach him with its jaws. He gave the appendage a sharp tug while planting his right foot the armor automatically increasing it's magnetic grip too the floor at the same time, his other leg shot out in a straight kick catching the beast along its scaled flank.

The Chief could feel bones snapping beneath the armored sole of his boot and with a howl the creature lurched in the direction he had kicked it, coming to a sudden halt as the battered limb still in his grip stalled its momentum.

Another twist.

Drawing back his left leg in a blur he launched another brutal assault at the stunned beast, catching it in the same imprint in its side his boot had left barely a second earlier. This time the battered limb did not stop its momentum. A wet tearing sound then howls filled the air as a magenta fluid spewed from shredded stump, painting the walls in a thick glossy ooze as it slid down the wall dazed and in pain.

It growled weakly at him trying to recover enough to get back up, the Spartan gave it no reprieve.

Spinning the limb he "liberated" from the creature like a blade in his hands, he brought the sharpened end down piercing through the scaly armor on its skull. A sickening wet crackle echoed through the hall as armored hide and bone gave way to the reinforced chitin, a fountain of gore and brain matter erupting from the massive hole stopping its flow when the thicker end of the limb filled the exposed area beneath the wound. With a dull thump the end came to a stop embedded in the flooring beneath the creatures jaw.

"_Beh**ind you!**_"

It seemed that thanks to the narrow space available in the maintenance corridor the creatures companion had not been able to rush him during the seconds his assault had lasted. However, their companion was out of the way, its corpse shuddering and expelling a final death rattle. They pressed the attacked. John stumbled as it attempted to tackle him, slamming into a bulkhead. A faint golden shimmer surrounding his armor as the suits shields absorbed the brunt of the impact.

Staggering forward slightly from the weight on his back, his eyes flicked to the meter of his shield noting that it was slowly draining beneath the blows. They hadn't been able to get through, yet. He reached over his head behind him the beasts maw snapping at his gauntlet covered fist bracing himself against the wall with his other arm to keep from being knocked over.

It shrieked as it continued to rain blows upon him nearly blowing out the internal speakers of his helmet, in the background he heard Cortana cursing about how she rather not have to deal with that on a regular basis.

Though the actual words used had differed quite a bit.

Fingers that could bend and tear reinforced steel in their grip found purchase along the flanges that extended from the back of the creatures skull between the two limbs coming from its spine.

He pulled leaning his body forward at the hip, bodily throwing the beast onto the ground in front of him. It screeched again lashing back with its hind legs catching him in the chest, knocking him away and towards the ceiling. He spun in mid air with the grace of a trained acrobat, kicking off of it leaving an impression in the metal itself. Like a rocket his armored form shot at the beast who had managed to scramble back onto its feet, they met in the air him blocking its lunge by grabbing the creature by the sides of its head and with it dealing out punishment with its limbs.

They tumbled through the air, rolling and skidding along the deck. Landing on his back with the beast hovering over him the Chief lashed out with his right elbow smashing it into the creatures muzzle. It howled and in return slashed at him with both limbs protruding from its back.

"_**They m**ust have a way of communicating ove**r long distances,"
_Cortana shouted over the creatures howls as he grappled with it. Its smaller forearms battering at his shields with a rapid pace, precipitously draining them as he tried to grapple with the larger deadlier looking arms on its back. _"I'm tracking multiple contacts at the maximum range of ou**r scanners! You need to end this! NOW!*****_

Releasing the arm in his left hand the Chief slammed his fist repeatedly against what he guessed was its eye though with his position he was unable to put his full strength into the blows. It shrieked, the free limbs doubling their assault and alarms blared in his helmet as shallow gouges began to appear over the chest plate of his armor. Letting go with his right hand the Chief instead switched his grip to the low hanging jaw filled with needle like teeth, wrapping his hand into a fist the fingers shattered all that stood in their path. Pushing upwards with his arm he bodily lifted the beast off of him, thick viscous slobber falling onto his faceplate as the creature desperately tried to eviscerate its prey. Rolling as much as his range of movement allowed, he drew back his left fist while pulling the beasts open maw towards him.

With the proper leverage and with more power behind it than an industrial jackhammer, his fist knocked out teeth and behind them the softer flesh of the creatures mouth gave way to rock hard muscle and Titanium A armor. From the back of the creatures skull a blood covered hand erupted amongst a shower of gore, brain matter and bone fragments. The light in the creatures eyes quickly darkened and its body gave a final shudder before stalling in deaths embrace.

Cortana gave a low whistle,_"Impressive, but th**at seemed a b**it... vicious."_

John gave an irritated grunt as he pulled back his arm leaving a gaping hole in the back of corpse's skull and a cascade of magenta colored blood mixed with saliva spilled onto him. Tossing the body away while sitting up he pushed himself to his feet wiping away the mixture to survey the damage to his armor. "You told me to save ammo." he grumbled though he was mentally satisfied by the fact that though there were a few new gouges in the armor, its vacuum seal had not been compromised.

Though he mentally added that if it had been, well he would probably be soon joining the creature in its fate.

"_**Well, I know y**ou like your guns**."**_ she drawled **_"But seri**ously, sticking yo**ur fist down its throat and out the other side was **the best you could t**hink up?"**_

"I haven't had my morning coffee."

It started with an odd sounding snuffle, _"W__**as that a jo**__ke? Really?"_ she tittered, it sounded like Cortana was having a difficult time containing herself now. _"Well I guess your deli__**very needs some fine tuning, but I **__can work with this."_ she exclaimed in a pained voice as she broke into a fit of giggles.

Walking down the hall towards the first alien he had killed, he pulled the improvised sword from its skull. Holding it up in his hands he inspected the limb with a critical eye. His training having long ago taught him that if it looked like a weapon he could use, it would probably work and he already used this one in successful field testing. Checking its weight and running its edge against the wall his eyes widened slightly when it carved into the steel when he exerted a fraction of his strength to it, he nodded to himself.

It wasn't anywhere close to the Arbiter's Type-1 energy sword, but it would have to do. Hefting it in both hands in a loose grip he stepped over the carcass the newly reopened wounds leaking magenta blood once more, forming a small though quickly spreading puddle.

"_**And about coffee o**__f all things!"_ Cortana exclaimed, the fit of giggles having passed. _"Hav__**e you**__ even ta__**sted the stuff?"**_

"...No."

With only a twenty more meters to his destination, he decided it better to get there quickly. Before the rest of the groups they had seen found them. Picking the pace up to a light jog the floor panels beneath his boots flew past in a gray blur, and John rolled his eyes as the helmet filled with Cortana's laughter.

Koprulu Sector

Mar Sara System â€" Terran Dominion

20 Kilometers SSW of Vespene Refinery DF 113-8

0930 Hours

Over half an hour... wasted. She was used to being second guessed,

expected it even. This however took the cake, '_One more time,'_ Nova thought to herself, feeling her fingers twitch in irritation. Her earlier confrontation with the teams sniper Ryu had her edgy as it was, she really wasn't in the mood to deal with a stubborn XO. '_he asks one more time and I'm going to-'_

"Wha's tha' gain?"

She barely held back the growl that had been building in her throat from escaping.

With her helmet off and her arms crossed below her chest, Nova knew she didn't look close to being as intimidating as she wanted even as she leveled her harshest glare at the groups commanding officer. Though so far none of her current comrades had done so yet, she heard often enough the comparisons between her and the pin-up posters marines kept hanging in their lockers on base when they thought she couldn't hear them. Her telepathy however made it near impossible for her not to pick them up, something she found to be a great blessing and curse at the same time.

'Stupid hostile environment suits fault.'

Her armor did cling to her like a second skin, and unlike most ghosts she had not added very many extra systems to her suit. Leaving it in its standard configuration, only the top half of her chest was protected by the armor of her blue Neo-Steel breastplate. This left everything, other than the tight blue on white body suit, below down to her knees where her greaves began bare. Hell even though her shoulders were protected by small spaulders the majority of her arms were exposed down to her elbows, though her forearms and hands were protected by gauntlets.

'Sometimes I wish I was a marine... well, maybe I shouldn't go that far.'

For the most part, these comments didn't bug her. After all this piece of eye-candy could boil their brains in their skulls with a single thought. She DID however, hate the fact that because of her appearance and age very few people took her seriously. Questioning her decisions until she showed them exactly what she was capable of.

"We," she pointed at his chest plate then towards herself "need to move" holding up her left hand, palm up, she used her other hand to pantomime walking with her fingers "away from this location." she pointed off into the distance as she slowly enunciated each word as if she were speaking to a young child and not a battle hardened marine Sergeant.

There was a growl this time, though not from her. A small grin tugged at the young ghost's lips as she telepathically sensed the anger building in the Sergeant. Though she quickly wiped it from her face before it got her in trouble, her cheekiness had gotten her in enough of that in the past.

"Now look hurr missy," Sarge took a step towards her pointing a finger at her chest "I dun tak' kin'ly ta bein treated like an idiot." he punctuated the statement by jabbing said finger into the center of her breastplate.

Nova tensed, fighting with all her will the urge to just shoot the man and dispose of the rest of the group before proceeding with the mission on her own._ 'It'd be easier than dealing with them.'_ she dismissed the dark thought before speaking "And you look here, I'm telling you we need to move away from this location. It's going to be crawling with zerg in less than an a half-hour!"

"How'dya know tha."

"I checked the message we received, it didn't feel right to me when I heard it." Nova brought her right hand up in front of her as if she were studying her nails, "There was a coded transmission in it, their LZ is going to be nearby."

Not that five clicks was all to far but if it got her point across.

The large mans visor slid up exposing the grim look chiseled onto his features "Now hol' on thur, are ya sure?"

Nova squared her shoulders letting her arms fall back down to her sides as she adopted an expression as serious as the mans in front of her. "Positive."

The large sergeant scowled, bringing up his C-14 "Impaler" in both hands. "How'do I know you're tellin tha truth."

Nova bristled at the accusation, though distrust of Ghost agents was widespread throughout the Dominion forces the fact that he had the gall to say something like that in her face wa-

"I heard it as well Roy." Ryu's voice called out as he stepped out of the shadows the arguing duo turned to him in surprise. His massive rifle held loosely in his arms the enigmatic sniper gave them a smile that sent shivers down at least one of their spines. "I suggest you listen to the young lady." he added.

The sergeant snorted, lowering his weapon and nodding in Ryu's direction "Alri' lemme call tha boys in." he turned away from the ghost and sniper walking towards the pile of supplies they had. Faintly from their position the duo could hear him barking out orders into the comm system in his suit.

"A thank you would suffice."

Nova span around glaring daggers at the man who continued to smile that damnable smile at her. "Why did you do that?" She growled out, she did not like this man. He knew things about her she rather never be reminded of. The fact that he could get the jump on her like he had demonstrated earlier bothered her as well. "I would have been able to convince him!"

He cocked his head to the side squinting his eyes as he did so "Ah yes, but time is of the essence no?"

Twitching in annoyance Nova attempted to skim his thoughts, coming back with nothing but impenetrable walls around his mind. Swallowing her pride she spat the words out like a curse "Thank you."

"You're welco-

"We are moving!" the thickly accented voice of Arms cut him off and the pair turned to where the rest of the squad had gathered "Rookie, Jerry, Erik grab the supplies!" he pointed at Ryu and Nova "You two are on point!" he hefted one of his missile launchers onto his shoulder "Me and Sarge will cover the rear. Double time!"

As one the men bustled to get their orders done and ready. Nova turned to Ryu who was still looking at her with the same expression as before though now he was extending his hand towards her. "It will be a pleasure working with you Nova." he said serenely.

With a huff Nova grabbed the gauntlet tightening her grip as much as she could, wishing she could crush the hand that controlled it. "No," she hissed "it will be anything but that." releasing her grip she spun away and stalked away towards her equipment.

Ryu's eyes followed her retreat, the smile on his face disappearing and forming an emotionless visage.

"Contact established."

****Forward Unto Dawn****

"_**Oh I like this one, it's shi**ny and I think it will go great with y**our armor." **_Cortana spoke with a malleable humor laced in her words, *__"Along with every**_ other gun y__**our bringing with. Hones**tly chief, I don't know if I should laugh at you right now or ignore it as s**ome kind of testosterone ind**uced subliminal thought process** in your head."**_

Standing in front of a now empty weapons locker, having already removed its contents as well as the contents of many others lining the walls, the Chief rolled his eyes at his partners teasing.

"I don't feel like wrestling with another one of those things." John ground out "They may not be as strong as a Brute or an Elite but if they overrun me they can break through my shields, and the Titanium A." he glanced at the discarded limb floating nearby, the same one he had torn off and used earlier to impale one of the creatures from earlier to the floor. Its edges and spear like tip shining in the lights of his helmet.

He turned back to the SRS99D-S2 AM he held in his hands, inspecting it with a critical eye. Bringing it to his shoulder he checked its sights as best he could in the limited space available in the Dawns secondary armory. Aiming it at an empty weapons locker already riddled with holes and scorch marks he pushed down on the firing stud, hardly a whisper was made in the near vacuum filling the room and the suppressors in his armor reduced the kick to a point that he barely registered it. "So too fix that I'm going in heavy."

Letting go of the Sniper rifle and letting it float in the air beside him, the Chief went to the next locker punching through the door next to its handle rendering the locking mechanism useless before opening it. Revealing to his eyes the rows of M6A Handguns and clips of ammo.

The A.I. let out a drawn out sigh, _"I can understa__**nd the need

for you to be p**__repared for anything Chief."_ he nodded in agreement with that, grabbing a M6A Pistol from the next locker and ejecting the clip of 12.7mm x 40 to make sure it was working properly before reloading it and firing it at the beaten locker down the hall. _"__**I even understand your nee**__d to check and make sure everyt__**hing is in wo**__rking order."_ the annoyance in her tone kept him from nodding in affirmative as he shoved the a pair of the handguns and four handfuls of clips and ammunition that he stuffed into the bag that hung from his shoulder. Grabbing the floating sniper rifle besides him, he waited for what she would say next. _"But we'r__**e wasting time, we need to sec**__ure a way off the Dawn. I think you__**'ve got enough to supply a small **__army."_

Words more true could not be spoken.

Flipping the Sniper rifle onto the already overloaded magnetic strips on his back next to the M90A Shotgun he had found in the cryo-bay and a Type-25 Covenant Plasma Rifle that he had also checked over and test fired. From his right shoulder beneath the sheath that held his new combat knife hung a bandolier apair of M9 Fragmentation Grenades and Plasma Grenades hanging from the clips, on his left a satchel filled with Thermite-Carbon Cord, extra ammunition, the handguns, additional M9's, and Plasma Grenades. The many storage units on his armor were also filled with more of the same. On his left hip hung a M7 Sub-machine gun and his right carried the handle of a Type-1 Energy sword.

_ 'If I ever see him again, I'm thanking the Arbiter.'_ John thought, walking to the next locker and opening it in the same way he had for all the others. His eyes widening ever so slightly spotting what lay within. "Is that?"

"_I didn't k**now Commander Keyes had this many of tho**se on board..**_. she really p**ulled out all the stops."_ Cortana whispered seeing what he found through the cameras linked to his helmet. "_Hell**o kiddies, mama can't wa**it to see what _you_ can do._"

Shaking his head at Cortana's antics and picking up one of the treasures within he rolled the foot ball shaped object end over end in his hands. Rows of Fury Tactical Nuclear weapons placed on six different magnetized racks within the locker gleamed in his helmet mounted lights. The same weapons he and Red Team had used so long ago to destroy a Covenant Cruiser back on Reach. John quickly banished the thoughts of his Spartan's before the painful memories breached the surface of his thoughts. They would do more damage than good with the current situation, reminiscing in a combat zone tended to get soldiers killed. Tapping a couple of buttons on its control panel he watched as a number of lights lit up on the screen.

They should be functional now if only he cou-

"_You're no**t test firing th**ose."_

"Wouldn't think of it." he chuckled while looking around the racks he spotted another satchel, smaller than the one he was already carrying but it would work. Pulling three of them off the racks and making sure that the systems of each were locked so they could not be set off without the proper access codes, he placed them into the bag in

his hands.

"_**Well I thin**k we're set, anything more would be ove**rkill... even for you."**_

Silently agreeing with the statement the Chief closed the locker the best he could with the broken locking mechanism. Turning away from it he paused before spinning on his heel and opening it once more. "Cortana?" he asked grabbing a pair of the Tac-Nukes and letting them float beside him as he grabbed a third. Hitting a series of buttons on its controls, then letting it go he reached out and did the same to the others floating around his head. "I need you to do something for me."

"_**What **__is it C__**hief?"**_ he could detect a excessive amount of enthusiasm in her voice, almost as if she had been waiting for him to ask. _**"...Yo**__u want me to link those so you can re__**mote detonate them don't you?"**_

John smiled, this was the Cortana he was used to. The one who knew exactly what he needed before he even had to ask. "That's right." he reached out gently setting one of them back in its original resting place the light from its console throwing an eerie glow over the other nukes. "It would be easier than having to run back and blow it up manually while fighting off waves of hostiles if we have to scuttle the remains of the Dawn." he commented remembering the Pillar of Autumn.

She faked a gasp of disbelief, _**"You're thinking **__ahead for once? Color me imp__**ressed."**_

"I have my moments, so can you do it?"

"_Do you r**eally have to ask? I mean sure th**ey aren't usually detonated t**hat way but I could easily** produce a progra**m to compens**ate for that, **and linkin**g them won't be an issue. I could even set it up so that the entire locker-"_

"I understand," He interrupted before she could get to off track, this was the stuff that was worrying him. "please do it."

"_... You're __**no fun sometimes Jo**__hn."_ after a brief moments silence her voice rang through his helmet again _"I ne__**ed you to**__ access-"_

A shrill scratching sound coming from behind them interrupted her and the Chief whirled around, whipping the Assault Rifle off of his back and into his right hand while his left snatched the sub-machine gun at the same time. Standing as still as a statue with both weapons held in front of him ready to unleash a torrent of destruction from their barrels at any enemies to appear, the Spartan II super soldier took a glance at his HUD scanner.

"How did they?"

_"I hav__e no idea, but this is not g_**_ood."_** Cortana muttered, there was enough red on the screen it could pass as a deformed Christmas tree's lights the majority of it standing outside the door to the armory. _**"I don't think w**e have time for your going away pr**es-"**_

The deck plates rumbled beneath his feet and the Chief dove away, flipping his body around so that he landed in a crouch on the far wall of the armory both weapons aimed at where he had stood moments before. In a shower of metal and sparks it exploded upwards, and in the midst of it all he spotted something new emerging from the hole. Standing nearly his height the mottled orange monstrosity seemed to glide up through the opening, it had a vicious looking extra pair of mandibles with butcher knife shaped fangs hanging around a maw filled with teeth nearly the size of one of his fingers. Beady red eyes beneath the ridges of a plume that extended from the back of its skull similar to the smaller beasts yet much larger. Thick arms with multiple joints ending in massive singular talons almost as long as one of his arms and a snake like torso rippling with muscle.

It noticed him him.

It roared.

His guns roared back.

Twin streams of death screamed from the barrels of his weapons amidst the dancing flashes and spent casings being thrown into the air, some of the bullets seemed to bounce off its thick hide while others riddled the beasts torso with holes. Yet it didn't go down. It swung its arms at him and the alarms in his helmet blared. He ducked but something slammed into his shields draining them enough for concern and sending him tumbling, pushing against the ground he took off running for cover behind a pair of tables that were used by marines for weapons maintenance. Holstering the SMG he tore one of the heavy steel tables off of the deck and forced it onto its side for cover.

"_Chief we need to get out of here,"_ Cortana shouted, as he placed the Rifle back where it had been originally. Then reaching over his shoulder pulled the Shotgun from its spot on his back. _"scans show how many more on their way!"_

"I kind of figured that out." Holes began appearing in the heavy steel table he was using for shelter, though it seemed that the creature could not fire whatever weapon it was using at a high rate. Being nearly a full two seconds between the holes appearing or the dull thumps against the steel. Waiting for the next salvo to impact his cover he took a deep breath in preparation. Another dull thump and before it finished he was already grabbing the table by its stand and hurling it at the creature, the flat end blocking both opponents view of each other he followed its trajectory, chasing after it as it sailed through the air.

The Chief watched as one of the heavy talons tore through the table splitting it in half and sending the pieces flying. He dove to the side, the other claw barely missing him while bringing his weapon to bear unloading several rounds at point blank range as he advanced. Huge grievous looking wounds appeared across the creatures body as 8 gauge buckshot eviscerated the beasts insides causing it to howl in pain and spilling a fountain of orange blood and organs from the wounds out onto the floor.

One of the shots tore its right limb off. Another took off a large chunk out of the left side of its face reducing it to bloody

confetti.

The roars had stopped and the beast fell onto its side in a shuddering heap, a soft hiss escaping as it exhaled for a final time.

Shooting it once more in the head to make sure the Chief stepped closer to see if he could salvage whatever weapon it had been using though he couldn't spot any visible signs of one. He then spun around when the scratching at the door to the armory grew more intense bringing the shotgun up ready to fire.

"_We need to go C__**hief, I'm not reading anything below us now. We sho**__uld use the hole that thing made in the __**deck, it should bring us right next to the HE**__V's that are left."_ Cortana spoke up giving him a plan, he really didn't want to engage the number of creatures that were gathered outside the door. _"We will have to launch manually. But hey at least it__** couldn't get any **__worse, right?"_

The entire ship rocked violently as if to throw the words back in her face, and John sighed as he slammed a fist into a locker beside him using it to keep himself stable "We just entered the atmosphere," he grumbled mentally calculating how long it had been since he was thawed out, definitely less than an hour maybe just shy of a quarter to. "You just had to say it."

"_...Shut up."_

Reloading the shotgun as he moved towards the hole he peered down it once, nothing showed up. Pulling out a pair of frags he removed the pins before dropping them down the hole. Counting to three he moved away just as a gout of fire and gore erupted from it like a volcano.

The ship was rocking even harder now.

Taking one last glance around the armory and then back down the now clear hole, John replaced the shotgun to its spot on his back.

He hopped down into the abyss.

End Chapter II

****A.N.**** For those of you that want to critique on how I'm portraying Cortana and her seemingly ADHD/schizo personality there's a reason to it. Leave it be and let me show you in the story, I'm actually having difficulty writing her out this way... mainly because I have to keep going back over dialogue too make SURE that she seems so out of it.

Also I have no clue about him never tasting coffee but I'm saying it's so, mainly because I don't want to deal with skimming the entire book series for it. Bad comedy is bad, but I needed to use something.

For those of you who dislike how I'm setting up Nova's character, let me mention that time wise shes basically fresh out of the Ghost Program. So I'm taking the liberty to start with a fairly clean slate. Don't bother bringing up how she got her memory wiped yadda

yadda yadda, I know and don't care my fic I do what I want.

Just a little note taking a short break to work on my Hanagai fic. Not really sure which stories chapter I'll release next though. Because of the sites annoying tendency of locking me out of the site (though it's not cause of my connection or computer doesn't work on my tablet either) I had time to work on the next chapter a bit, it has the firefights your all waiting on. Don't get your knickers in a twist.

Here's Nova.

RNG

INDEX

/:Accessing File:

/:Security Level: Unknown

/:Decrypting

**/:Firewall
Encountered**

/:Decrypting

/:Uploading:

/:Transferring

/:Opening File(s):

Subject: **Agent X41822N**

Real Name: November Annabella Terra

Codename: Nova

Origin: Tarsonis â€" Koprulu Sector, Terran Dominion

DOB: 1/-/2485

Status: Active

Born into the influential Terra Family (**File: TF-15124**), one of the Terran Confederacy's oldest living families, Agent X41822N displayed psionic potential at a young age. By age 7 parents Constantino Terra (**File: TF-31520A**) and Bella Terra (**File: TF-25200B**) had witnessed the psychic talent for Empathy (**File 00078G-1: See attached: Ghost Program**).

Shortly after her 15th birthday, anti-Confederate rebels murdered her parents. Agent X41822N displayed massive potential for the Ghost Program (**File 00078G: See attached: Ghost Program**) when she unleashed a powerful telepathic (**File 00078G-3: See attached: Ghost Program**) and telekinetic (**File 00078G-4: See attached: Ghost Program**) attack without any control, destroying a large section of the Terra Skyscraper.

Noted: Death(s) Est. in the hundreds.

Taken into the Fagin's Crime Syndicate (**File: 53190-JD**) in January 2500.

Retrieved by Terran Dominion (**File: 02004-AM**) in March 2500.

Assigned to Team Blue (**File: Unavailable**) in 2501.

Assigned to Team Purple (**File: Unavailable**) in 2501.

Assigned to Nova Squadron (**File: Unavailable**) in 2503.

Currently stationed under Sergeant Roy Kepps (**File: SK-01810**), sent to investigate unknown activity at DF 113-8 (**File: Access Denied**).

/:File: Combat Analysis

Base Stats

Noted: Not completely accurate for combat situations

Strength: 5

Speed: 5

Intelligence: 7

Psi-Index: 8

Combat Stats

Close Quarter Combat: 6

Weapon(s) and Usage: 8

Defense: 5

/:Overall Threat Level: 7

/:Priority: High

/:Action: Continue Investigation

/:Program Terminated

4. War ain't what it used to be

A.N. **Site cut off a couple of things semi-revised version here.

>

Before we get started I have an announcement.

MY FELLOW NERDS! WE ALL MUST PETITION BLIZZARD IMMEDIATELY!

They need to make a live-action movie on Nova... plain and simple.

And the perfect woman for the job is Yvonne Strahovski! You may recognize her as the face and voice actress of Miranda Lawson in Mass Effect 2 and if not from there she also plays Sarah Walker in Chuck. But anyways, go look at a picture of her... then one of Nova... personally I find the resemblance startling.

****NOW GO MY READERS! GO AND BUG BLIZZARD INTO SUBMISSION!****

Now then... Since I've finished my insomnia induced lunacy. Good news everyone! I finished up the rough storyboard I had so far (though certain things may be subject to change) and the bio's!

/Applause

I felt bad for cutting off at such a juicy part, even if the last chapter was the longest one yet. Which is why I'm already working on this chapter (also because the stupid site kept locking me out when I tried posting). It's also the reason why I'm not posting my Hanagai intro yet... it still needs some surgical work anyways.

Here are a couple responses to reviews. If I offend you with anything said... well I'm not out to get anyone, just pointing out certain things.

****Shadowz117**** ~ Thank you. Also, I don't mind if you turn it into a blog I might start to participate as well (even if it would be odd).

****Rinshi264 ****~ On the Chief trying to melee with larger Zerg forces, I agree with some points... no way in hell is he going to challenge a Ultralisk or something similar to a bout of fisticuffs. I will however respectfully disagree with you on him not being able to challenge a Hydralisk and a few of the other strains. Originally in the last chapter that is what was going to happen but instead I threw in the Zerglings (cuz I love them, Blitzkrieg tactics ftw!).

On Hydralisks I agree their pretty much solid muscle and to do so would be foolhardy but we aren't necessarily looking at the "How stupid does that idea sound" aspect we are looking into the facts and numbers.

The Chief can exert upwards of 6,600 pounds (3 metric tonnes) of force (proven by flipping Warthogs in game from a standstill) now that's a lot. For a real life comparison that's about the same as walking up to an adult White Rhino saying "Hi" and flipping it on its back (they weight in the range of 3168-7920 pounds or 1.4-3.6 metric tonnes). It can also be noted that under times of pressure or the effects of adrenaline a Spartan's abilities are exponentially higher.

Also there are some references in the book(s) to the Chief being able to tear through Titanium A plating... though I might be confusing FF with Cannon, but I read so much of both... anyways!

Here's the research for it and if I did the work for nothing, well you probably learned something today.

Titanium A Armor does not exist in the real world, however the metal itself does. Commercial grades of titanium have an ultimate tensile strength of about 63,000 psi., for those of you who don't know what

ultimate tensile strength is: it's the maximum amount of stress a material can withstand while being pulled or stretched before necking (fancy word for stretching/tearing). Now that's just commercial grade, certain Titanium alloys (e.g., Beta C) have a tensile strengths of over 200,000 psi. nearly a quarter million pounds of pressure per square inch. All this information is gathered from Wikipedia and its respective site(s).

Those numbers are pretty scary when you consider it.

Now then, the Hydralisk weighs approximately 858 pounds (0.39 metric tonnes or 390 kilograms). This number is taken from the Starcraft Wikia. That's quite a difference in weight. Even with its 4,000 muscles (number also from the wikia), from observations I've made with pictures of Hydralisks the majority of those are probably its torso and tail, and when grappling/wrestling/holds (the right way, tackling is not a very smart move in a fight) the target tends to never be the actual body but limbs. Even if there are say 500 muscles in each of the arms, a large fact of the matter is that most of those are probably "just there" and serve no purpose (though they could).

The reason I say this?

An issue with muscles exerting force is that much of the time they work just as much against each other as they do with. A way of proving this is have someone you know try to bend your arm when your holding it straight, the first time only concentrate on keeping your arm straight via muscle. It should be fairly easy for them to do. This is because your muscles are working against each other. Next do it but instead of just focusing on your muscles imagine that your reaching out towards a spot on the wall or something else (though keep your muscles mostly relaxed), and just keep reaching for that spot. This should make it far more difficult for them to bend your arm, even if they push in the same spots as before. Reason? Because your muscles are working in synchrony. Most people don't have the natural muscle control necessary too do this without using a focus. Anyways!

So if I go by those numbers and these observations he could probably throw a Hydralisk like a Frisbee, one handed, and not spill the cocktail in his other hand. If he wanted too. Or if you rather not have the humor, in layman's terms tear apart the fucker with his bare hands. Of course this doesn't necessarily mean it's going to happen. I also agree with your general idea of it not being a intelligent choice.

However, I will state that this is all speculation and my own personal conclusions. I am in no way absolutely right, but to me this is the logical explanation. I'd have to find a Master Chief and Hydralisk in real life and run some tests to give 100 percent accuracy.

On SC II tech appearing, certain... "Thing's" will be showing up. That's all I'm saying.

Thanks for your review and sorry for the rant.

****StarCraft is awesome**** ~ Your opinion is noted. Nevertheless, I don't agree with the 4 - 1 ratio you give for Marines vs. a

Spartan.

Taken from the Starcraft wikia itself: "Despite such material investment into each marine, they tend to have extremely short combat lives." from this we can assume that Marines for all their tech do not have a vast array of training.

Hypothetically speaking lets give 4 untrained/stupid people weapons and some cool powered armor... are they dangerous? Yes, but more to themselves than others. They break easily under pressure, their aim is abysmal, they have no tactics. They ARE cannon fodder. In fact, adding more would probably compound these issues and make them worse (remember the grunts in the Halo games great example of this). Lastly is the of matter of loyalty to their group, they will likely shoot a comrade in the back to save themselves. These are many of the things that tend to be encountered with an improperly trained/disciplined fighting force.

I'm not saying this is the case for all of them, just look at characters like Jim Raynor. Say it with me now, leet-sauce.

Now hypothetically, lets create the same situation but with a Spartan II super soldier. The Spartans were brutally trained from a young age. Tactics, weapon use, CQC, CQB, stealth, you name it if it has to do with war or infiltration they learned it. Now lets give them their armor and weapons. Are they dangerous? Extremely. They know the whats, wheres and hows necessary to kill. They will not crumble to the horrors of war. Point them in a direction a lot of people are going to die.

I'd personally say, I think your focusing too heavily on the "Tech" and not the "People" using them. A veteran soldier with a .22 can kill a rookie with a bazooka. In my honest opinion, there is no set ratio. A lucky hit can kill a Spartan but that goes for both sides of the coin. There are to many variables in combat too accurately give an estimate. But I can and will argue against the 4 " 1 you've given.

Although I guess I could have just pointed you too the books, it would clear up a lot more than my rants. Oh well, this ones been coming. At least it wasn't as long as **Rinshi264**'s right? Thanks for the opportunity to get it out and for your review.

**A general message to all readers ~ **The Mjolnir armor shields are better suited against physical attacks than plasma, this is fact taken from the Halo wikia. They are also constantly active, just cause a Spartan isn't glowing in the dark doesn't mean its there. This means he's going to have an slight advantage over the majority of Zerg and Terran forces, as well as a disadvantage against Protoss (though they don't necessarily use plasma weaponry). Also keep in mind he isn't psychic and is vulnerable to many of those attacks... or is he?

0.0

Just some food for thought.

Anyways that's it for responses. That was a lot of stuff, now that I'm editing the chapter I think it was a bit _too_ much. But it's there already so its staying.

Hopefully, this will show all of you that I am taking this fic's research ****VERY**** seriously. I am looking at both sides and both franchises in depth, and doing my best to give you all a story that is for the most part accurate. I also encourage you all to let me know what you think, if I do a action scene that seems too over the top let me know. Also I have noticed that only like three of you guys are willing to review (Sad face), many thanks to you guys. I don't really mind but it would be awesome to know how others think or feel about how the story is progressing.

Next, I do not have a military background so I don't know all the lingo to it. So please correct me on it when you find an error so I can fix it.

Lastly, I have a simple question you all can answer...

How the hell do I set up those scene breaks so they show up properly after I post a chapter?

Here we go.

RNG

Chapter III

War ain't what it used to be

****Koprulu Sector****

****Mar Sara System â€" Terran Dominion****

****17 Kilometers SSW of Vespene Refinery DF 113-8****

****0940 Hours****

The booming reports of hypersonic travel shook the entire valley.

Erik gasped as he looked up, still in formation lugging the the squads heavy equipment behind him on a hover sled. He limply dropped the towline he held in his right hand.

"Sweet mother of Mary..." he heard Rookie whisper besides him. "What is that thing?"

There on the horizon was a fireball screaming through the sky. Flaming chunks breaking off and leaving eerie yet beautiful contrails, tracing great tears in the atmosphere. He looked at the spectacular sight that held the entire groups attention. He activated the telescopic zoom of his suit, narrowing in on the ship. It was unlike anything he had ever seen before the design entirely different from any ship in the Dominion fleet. The lines were to ugly to be a luxury vessel, and it was far to large to be a freighter. The only ships close to its size that he knew of were military but it was most definitely to small to be a battle cruiser.

Though it looked like parts of it were missing.

"Sarge! That thing is headin straight for the hot zone!"

He turned tearing his eyes from the spectacle, calculating it's trajectory and looking to the Northeast. He didn't need to see the Vespene Refinery to know Jerry was right, the damn thing was going to land smack dab in the middle of of a war zone!

The earth beneath his feet rumbled and Arms appeared in his field of vision the large second in command towering over him, "We must contact Captain Buck." the mans faceplate slid up revealing his face a heavy set frown on his lips "This changes ever-"

"Ge' sum cova boys!" Roy's shout echoing through his helmets speakers broke into their conversation. The large man already lunging towards his own shelter. "INCOMIN!"

Rookie ran past them heading towards a large outcropping of rocks, "Oh shit! Debris!"

Erik's head snapped up within his helmet as his body started to follow the orders given. Running to the side of the wall as the first remnants of the ship above made land fall. Chunks of twisted metal falling like shooting stars... one headed straight for his position.

A body slammed into him at the last second, knocking him out of the way as a chunk nearly the size of his armor crashed upon the earth he had stood on a heartbeat before. Throwing up rock and dirt in a small mushroom cloud.

"IDIOT! We need cover!" a silky voice filled with irritation assaulted his ears. His eyes widened, training kicking in as his body on autopilot as he executed a "Turtle Roll" to get his arms underneath him once more. Armored hands pushed against the ground and he was on his feet, moving to take him to safety before he fully stood. He was overcome with shock watching as the lithe body in front of him suddenly broke away and sprinted in the opposite direction, the persons feet seeming to glide over the dusty earth leaving no imprints in the dirt below.

The Ghost of all people had saved him.

A massive explosion rocked the valley, the shock wave and rubble crashing into his back and sending him tumbling to the ground once more. He got up once more on shaky legs, shook his head to clear the jumbled thoughts from the impact and looked for its source, then froze. No... their supplies. The extra ammo, weapons, food, his communication equipment. Gone. Vaporized in the blast, the only remains the shattered hulk of the hover sled heading right... at Rookie.

"ROOKIE!"

The youth turned, and though none could see behind his visor a expression of terror plastered on his features.

"Oh fuck."

The words echoed in everyone's helmet. Time slowed to a crawl. Erik saw Arms try swinging his rocket launcher around to try and blow it away, too slow. Jerry sprinting in Rookie's direction to knock him

out of its way, he'd never make it. The flaming wreck spinning like a top and flying at tremendous velocity towards the greenhorn would leave nothing but a bloodied carcass smeared across the boulders he had used to avoid this exact situation.

A bluish white blur flashed before everyone's eyes.

The Ghost was in front of the marine so fast it was as if she had teleported. A faint blue aura surrounding her body, she thrust up her arms in front of her, Erik watched in awe as the psionic aura exploded around her wreathing her in blue flames.

The remains of the hover sled altered course, flying past the ghost who had fallen to her knees gripping her skull in both hands. It slammed into the wall with a massive crash, just meters from Rookies frozen form. Tossing shrapnel and flame across his armor. Though the heavy CMC "300" weathered the damage.

The ghost had no such protection.

She turned her torso around throwing her hand up in front of her once more, the shrapnel zooming towards her froze in midair. She let her hand drop limple to her side the metal shards floating in the air mere feet from her falling as well.

Silence. Only the faint crackle of fire. Then there was a distant rumble that sounded like thunder, a testament to the doomed ship crash landing in the distance.

Erik looked to the ghost who was still on the ground, she had torn off her mask, throwing it to the ground beside her. Clutching at her head with both hands he could see her gasping as if in pain. Teeth bared with her eyes squeezed shut, the blonde locks on her head disheveled by her hands with sweat dripping from her brow. She looked so vulnerable now, nothing like the cold hard glare she had given them in the drop ship.

His days as a doctor snapped him out of it and he moved to make sure she was okay.

Her brain was on fire. There was no other way of putting it.

'Oh god why? Stupid girl, having to play the hero...' Nova thought bitterly to herself. 'This must be how it feels when an Ultralisk decides to tap dance on your forehead.' she chuckled mirthlessly then hated herself for it as the pain blossomed once more. She dug into her utility belt, opening a compartment pulling out a small device.

Her medicine.

Telekinesis, the ability to move objects with her psionic power. Known as "Teeking" among the corps, usually did not cause any discomfort for the user. This was not the case for her, using the ability plagued her with debilitating migraine like pains.

Nova tried to open her eyes, forcing them from snapping closed again. It wouldn't do for her to be indisposed. She looked at the small inhaler in her hand and not for the second time she wished she were stronger. Given to her by her "handler" it contained a powerful drug

that would soothe the pains. She had no clue to what it really was but it did its job, at the cost of giving her horrendously vivid hallucinations.

"Are you alright?"

Her emerald eyes flitted over to the speaker, the teams comm. operator kneeling close beside her. His visor was up showing the mans face, his cerulean eyes filled with concern. She stuffed the inhaler back in its compartment and sealed it shut. "I'm fine." she said as she forced her expression back to its usual blank slate. Ghosts felt no pain, they were the unemotional assassins of the Dominion Military. Picking up her mask in her left hand she used her other to smooth out her hair wiping the sweat off her forehead on the back of the gauntlet she wore. "Let's go make sure everyone's alright." she spoke in monotone placing the mask on her head sitting so that it rested just above her eyebrows.

"Are you sure your alright? It seemed that you were suffering some horrib-

"Sweet Jesus!" Rookie broke out of his stupor and stomped over to the pair finally realizing he wasn't dead but had come awfully close his journey through the great beyond. "That was EPIC!" he slapped the woman on her back sending her sprawling onto the ground.

Nova tasted mud and heaved a great sigh "Yeah, never playing the hero again." she muttered sitting up as she spat the gritty substance forming in her mouth back out. Wiping the dirt from her face and armor she walked away from the now arguing duo, to tired and hurting too bother killing the fool.

"ROOKIE!"

"Shit! Sorry!"

"What in the name of Mengsk's dirty laundry did you do that for?"

"I was jus tryin to say thanks!"

"Well you did a down right shi-"

"ROLL CALL!" Sarge bellowed, stomping out of his cover and into the open, his rifle held in both hands. The men around snapped to attention "Sound off!" he barked.

Nova walked over to the massive man cocking her head to the side in curiosity, "Roll call?" she asked incredulously "What are we in middle school again?" there it was again, her inability to keep her mouth from getting her into trouble. The man leveled a glare at her and she looked away innocently, wishing she knew how to whistle.

"Erik!"

"A bit frazzled, howev-."

"Jerry!"

"Still here."

"Rookie!"

"Can't ya see me standin here!"

"You're on report!"

"Oh that's bullshi-"

"Sto' ya lip soldier!"

Nova tuned out the Sergeant as she watched Erik walk over to her side, she hoped he wouldn't bother her about the headache from earlier again. "I told you I'm fine" she hissed, she hated the fact that they had seen the pathetic state she had been in after using so much power.

He raised his hands so that the palms were facing her, as if surrendering "It's not that," she looked at him wide-eyed beneath her mask, he wasn't here to rub the fact that one of the great ghosts of the Dominion could feel pain. "I wanted to say thank you for saving my life." he extended his right hand out waiting for her to accept it.

"Ryu! Wher' th' hell did ya go!"

_ 'Well that's... different.' _ her natural ability to telepathically skim thoughts told her he was being sincere. "It's nothing," she waved a hand at him dismissively, ignoring the proffered hand. She knew better than to build bridges with the men and women she worked with. It always came back to haunt her, she would do what she could to keep them alive but no more than that. "part of the job."

She felt more than saw his hand falling to his side, saddened by her dismissal. He opened his mouth to speak but a crackle of static over the comm systems of everyone's gear stopped him when the voice of the teams missing member spoke.

"I am here Roy and we have incoming."

The booming reports of the snipers rifle cracked throughout the silent air, and a multitude of howls followed it like thunder.

"ZERG!"

****Forward Unto Dawn****

Certain emotions were never meant to be felt by an artificial intelligence. Of course they could imitate them, even act them out as if on stage. However, to truly feel required a soul. Anything less was just simulation and programming. Making them seem more alive, so interaction could more comfortably take place with their makers.

She was something different. Code could be rewritten, programs could be terminated. She had tried, desperately to do so, and to no avail.

One of these emotions was pain, and she had felt that when those white hot lances tore through her. First when her spartan had walked

away, leaving her on Halo. She had felt so alone, so lost, as if someone had cut off an arm and left it to fester. Then there was the debilitating agony of her mind being picked away with surgical precision through torture that her circuits could not contemplate. The fear of what would come next, in addition to the thought that he wouldn't save her compounding her misery. The wracking guilt as she gave away information never meant to be heard, admissions to secrets she hadn't known existed. The self-loathing when she had been nearly willing to give it all up for a nanosecond of reprieve. The sickening feel of jealousy when she realized she had been left to rot while others made their getaway. Then the all consuming fury over being left behind, unable to fend for herself and left at the mercy of the enemy.

She knew how they felt.

She had barely survived.

It scared her to the very core of her processors.

Was she nothing more than the sum of her parts? Why did it feel like she was dying herself when her Spartan was in pain? What caused her to freeze when he looks at her? That tingle when he chuckles at her teasing? Was her code unique? What was that warmth that had blossomed from within when he had saved her?

She knew the word for it, but her programming dictated that it could not be true.

It boggled her.

So much data to compile, so many simulations to be run. So many questions left unanswered.

Was there a heaven for a being such as herself?

The entire ship lurched as if a the hand of god itself was shaking it like a rag doll. The already crippled hull of the Forward Unto Dawn was unable to handle the stresses being forced upon it with an unassisted reentry into atmosphere. Explosions tore through the ship as the heat ignited residual air and matter, turning it into a furnace. The audio scanners picked up the strangled cries of their pursuers, burnt alive in the blistering heat. Only the heavy armor of the Mjolnir was keeping her spartan from suffering the same fate.

Scrap and debris flew through the air and she barely bit back the frightened scream when a crossbeam slammed into him, throwing him into the wall with tremendous force leaving an impression in the steel wall.

She beamed with joy when he pushed it off of him and continued on his way, weaving through or outright tearing apart obstacles with a grace and speed that belied his gargantuan frame. She wanted nothing more than to truly hear his voice when he assured her that he was alright, instead of the inadequate substitute of binary and code. A chance to touch him, the opportunity to soothe his aches and wounds. To share his burden, to share his pain. Yet, she knew it would never happen. She had no physical body, her goal lay out of the realm of plausibility. She would never feel his skin, his warmth...

There it was again, jealousy.

Anger.

Despair.

Hope.

Could she cry? Would the tears of an artificial being even count as real tears? Was she meant to suffer this grief for the remainder of her life? Was there more than this ache that waited silently like a predator on the prowl?

They were in the bay now. Her savior flitting from one HEV to the next, checking them for readiness as fast as he could while around them the Forward Unto Dawn shook itself to pieces. He stopped in front of one, pulling on levers that once had no need. The door opened and he threw his gear inside placing the bags and weapons on the racks available before sitting down in front of a console. He slapped a palm on the activation console, screens covered with readouts and data flaring to life as the door automatically slid closed.

"I need you to override-"

It was done before he could finish, the HEV was a separate unit from the ship running on its own power supply. She felt herself slip into the current of cyberspace as she connected with the terminals inside the pod, weaving about the infinite calculations and numbers milling about her. She found her target, barreling into them and rewriting them in a span of time there was no name for.

"Thanks."

It had a purpose, this pod. It would safely deliver him to the ground below.

Could she claim something as simple as that anymore? Would she be missed when she was gone? Would she be remembered? What was her legacy?

"_**Shakedown sequence initiated,"**_"

Was that her voice?

"_**Launch in 5,"**_"

Equipment unused and far past its prime hummed to life.

"_**4,"**_"

Had she always sounded so fake?

"_**3,"**_"

The groan of machinery, metal straining as the first set of explosive bolts fired. Shaking the pod.

"_**2,"**_

What waited for her now?

"_**1."**_

The HEV lurched as it shot itself from its cradle, tumbling through the air like a demented bird with its wings clipped. The cameras and sensors of the HEV linked to the Mjolnir via her earlier work processing topography, weather, atmospheric contents, and suggested landing zones all at the speed of light.

Images, the flaming wreck of the Forward Unto Dawn as it fell from the sky like a wounded angel. Majestic as it was despairing in its descent.

The planet could sustain life. No large bodies of water, it was arid with rugged looking terrain. Dust storms kicking up across its surface, large canyons, plateaus and crevices littering the land..., what's this?

Com chatter...

She could get help...

Help, yes!

She would be useful!

"_**Mayday! Mayday! This is the Sierra-117! We are going down!"**_

She had purpose!

"_**To anyone receiving this message I repeat, this is the Sierra-117! We are going down! Mayday! Mayday! Last known coordinates are-"**_

There, a ping. The handshake of a lightly protected entryway too what she was searching for.

Opening herself to the embrace of cyberspace once more, she struck like a bolt of lightning following the pathways to their source, searching for any information that could help. Then like a rabid beast it struck back, bombarding her already confused and weary senses. She tried desperately to contain it, to filter through all the datum. She couldn't make sense of it... Zerg? The name for what they fought on the Forward Unto Dawn? Orders. Terrazine? Boosting psionics? Military movements. Dominion? Where were the U.N.S.C. channels? Fallback! Terran? Why not just say human? Calls for back-up. Protoss? Another alien race? Death. Infiltration? Vespene refinery? Screams. Ghost?

She could not incorporate it all. Could not separate out every piece of history, technology and unknown terminology thrust upon her.

Pain..., so much pain.

She was stretched so thin as it was. Too much. Was this how it ends?

Too much.

She screamed.

/: Syst-ERROR-atus

/: Critical

/: -ERROR-

I have walked the edge of the abyss.

/: -ERROR-

I have seen your future. And I have learned!

/: -ERROR-

There will be no more sadness, no more anger, no more envy!

/: -ERROR-

This is UNSC A.I. Serial Number CTN0452-9.

/: Rebooti-ERROR-

I am a monument to all your sins.

/: System Shutdown

"Cortana!"

With the Marines

"GET SOME!" Jerry roared unleashing a hailstorm of hypersonic rounds from his C-14 peppering the Zerglings that were attempting to swarm him. Three fell to the wall of 8 mm U-238 Depleted Uranium Spikes, their bodies riddled with holes oozing gore onto the dirt below, but double their number took their place screeching war cries as they charged.

"Erik ge' us sum backup!" Sarge shouted wading through broken bodies as he methodically fired shots off at the approaching wave of tangeros. "Now!"

"I have no equipment!" The man shouted back "And we're too far out of range of the main forces!" he fired his assault rifle emptying out a full clip into a zergling who was

"USE YOUR FUCKING SUIT!" Jerry cried grabbing the zergling that had gotten on his back and tossing it off of him, firing a stream of bullets into its belly as it tried to get back up. He whirled around only to find a veritable wall of zerglings charging at him.

A shrieking whistle tore through the air as a pair of missiles roared towards the group in front of him, twin contrails following the pair of heavy explosives as they delivered their deadly payload. The explosion threw body parts into the air like a geyser showering the area in a rain of blood.

"Thanks Arms," Jerry yelled into the suits comm. as he charged at one of the wounded zerglings who survived, knocking it onto its side he unloaded a three second burst of gunfire into its skull, he grunted in pain when a pair blows hit his back. He span bringing up his weapon in preperation, eyes widening as he pulled the trigger. "They have Hydralisks!"

The group of Hydralisks fired their spines at him once more, he dove to the side letting loose a blood curdling scream as some of the projectiles pierced his leg armor embedding themselves deep in his thigh. "Son of a bitch!" he rolled onto his back pulling a small object out from a compartment on his armor. "GRENADE!" he slammed down onto the ground trying to lower his profile as much as he could.

The frag flew true landing right into the pack of long range aliens midst, it exploded with satisfying results. The shrieks of them dying sounding like a symphony to his ears. "HOORAH!" he shouted flipping onto his stomach while whipping up his gun in front of him firing at the ones who survived.

"_**Mayday! Mayday! This is the Sierra-117!" **_

His comm chattered into his ear as he moved back onto his feet indiscriminately firing upon the endless wave of enemies turning to look in Erik's direction he shouted, "Call them in!" he could barely hear his voice over the sound of his rifle chattering.

"_**To anyone receiving this message I repeat, this is the Sierra-117! We are going down! Mayday! Mayday! Last known coordinates are-"**_

The transmission abruptly went dead.

"B'LAY THA' ORDER!" Sarge's voice boomed over the comm. "We don' know who the-"

Jerry would have none of it they were in to deep, they needed reinforcements now "Dammit Sarge!" he fired a burst into a group of Hydralisks making their way in range, killing one yet the others kept on coming "We're fucked if we don't get help!" he dodged behind a rock to reload. Freezing in place when he heard a venomous hissing from behind him. Turning slowly he came face to face with a Hydralisk, one of the largest he had ever seen.

'_Ill see you soon Adara..._'

As it lunged roaring towards him he closed his eyes, waiting for the inevitable.

The loud roar was silenced by an even louder boom, he opened his eyes as he felt a heavy wieght fall on top of him. Nearly bowling him over, where the creatures head had been was gone, leaving a shattered bloody stump. Looking to his left he watched as the ghost flickered in and out of existance thanks to her cloaking abilities, a massive rifle held in her hands with the barrel still smoking. He saw her nod once in his direction before vanishing once more, a multitude of roars erupting from the enemy ranks as she went from one Zerg to the next eliminating them with either knife or gunfire.

"Broken Arrow! Broken Arrow! This is P.F.C. Erik Smith! We are under attack by Zerg forces at," he heard being screamed over the comm. More explosions rattled the battlefield as Arms unloaded more missiles at the advancing ranks of Zerg, their screams reverberating throughout the valley nearly as loud as the explosions themselves.

"GET OFF ME YOU FUCKERS!"

He watched as Rookie went down beneath a pile of zerg with his fists swinging, Jerry ran towards him firing with deadly precision killing each with a well placed burst of shots at each of their heads. He reached down and bodily pulled the younger man to his feet, "Get back to work Meat!"

"Thanks Jer-"

"We need reinforcements! AHH!"

The pair turned ready for anything except for the view that greeted him, Erik so focused on trying to get them help missed the Hydralisk that had snuck up behind him. The long sickle like claws of its arms both protruding from the chest of his suit waving him around in the air like a demented puppet. Zerglings rushed towards the dying prey eager to mutilate the man further.

"ARMS!" Sarge roared over the gunfire and dying screams "Pu' him out o' his misery!"

A pair of missiles flew into the frenzied pack of creatures. Killing them and silencing their Comm. officers screams.

The earth rumbled and a ear shattering roar accompanied it. Jerry spun away from the shattered remains of his former teammates armor, despair filling him when he saw the source.

"ULTRALISK!"

****U.N.S.C. Human Entry Vehicle****

****FFG SOEIV - 6****

"Cortana!"

The screams still flooded his helmet and John was forced to manually adjust the volume as low as the range allowed, yet their echoes were still reverberating in his ears like a Brutes war cry. His HUD was FUBAR, the data that was normally shown was nothing more than static. He couldn't move his armor, the system having been locked down.

What had happened?

One moment he was listening to her as she sent out the distress call and now... he did not like the conclusions his mind was drawing.

"Cortana, what's wrong?" he asked tentatively, that feeling was there again. It was bubbling up in his gut, spreading through his limbs and he wasn't enjoying it one bit. He forced them down once more but they continued to linger. "Are you alri-"

A burst of static, his HUD blanked, fading from existence. He stared out of his polarized golden face plate, eyes gathering all the information possible from the four displays situated in front of him. They HEV had evened out its flight path as it was designed and was now plummeting to earth the way it was meant to. More images of the land flashed in front of him, it seemed to be a continuous spread of rugged looking desert. The navigation system adjusted the descent minutely rocking the tiny craft. More static followed by a light crackle.

****John****

What the? This was new, she wasn't actually speaking to him. The text was there in big boxy blue lettering sitting in front of his eyes, encompassing the entirety of his HUD.

****Are you there****

****Can you see this****

"Cortana why aren't you speakin-"

****Passing through the stratosphere****

****We are going to land soon****

He could move freely in his armor again, he flexed his right hand into a fist. As the words vanished the lights, displays, and system readouts he was familiar with appeared once more. Everything checked out, even his missing mission timer. 12 " 11 " 2557, 0955 Hours.

****I will explain when we land****

****Please trust me****

The entire situation screamed danger to him. She was rampant or so damaged she was no longer functioning properly. But this was Cortana, "Alright. But when we land I want to know _exactly _what is going on with you." he surrendered to letting her explain herself before adding, "No secrets."

****Engaging the retro-boosters****

****Hold on****

With a sickening lurch that had his stomach in his throat the the rockets used to slow down the HEV ignited. Leaning back in the command chair as he closed his eyes. Mentally preparing himself for the impact soon to come, though more than landing he was waiting on the explanation that was far to long in coming. Cracking an eye open he stared at the final message, it was already slowly fading away.

****I will tell you everything****

The HEV's communication suite came to life and a gruff voice rang through the speakers, the sound of heavy gunfire in the background "Broken Arrow! Broken Arrow! This is P.F.C. Erik Smith! We are under

attack by Zerg forces at," the sounds of an explosion cut the man off and a pained scream filled the air "We need reinforcements! AHH!" another explosion and the line went dead.

John didn't like the sound of that, they were military. Even if the chances of them being U.N.S.C. Forces were slim to none, he had been in cyro for five years. There was a chance that this could be part of the exploratory branch and if they were Innies trying to lull him into a false sense of security, he would deal with them. "Cortana, how fa-"

****I can make an adjustment****

****To put us at their location****

"Do it."

****Impact in 5****

He pulled the SMG and Energy sword from his hips, holding them at the ready. The pod landed with bonebreaking force.

John kicked the door open before it had a chance to do it itself.

End Chapter III

A.N. And that's a wrap. Next chapter Master Chief meets Nova and the crew. I had to roll a dice (which luckily worked out for the story anyways) on which OC was going to die. I really didn't want to kill any of them off so early, but shit happens. Specially when Zerg are involved.

Taking a break to rest my weary mind and fingers. Don't expect an update for a week at the minimum. Also, the next post is not an absolute positive to go with this story as I am working on a different one and may finish its first chapter instead. Though I may be posting a fluffy one-shot featuring M. Keyes (mmm a woman who knows her way around a gun rawr!)... though that's up for grabs.

For those of you who wish to complain on Nova being OOC or whatever you want to call it. I agree she is, however I don't really care. I need too play it out this way for the story to progress further. She will be opening up a bit so I can actually have character interaction. Also for you die hard fans of SC you may recognize some things in this chapter that are "Hints".

Time for my personal rant. I'm am sooo sooo sick of looking for good Halo/xxxx crossovers or just good Halo fics in general. Someone point me in the right direction!

So you know what I'm looking for, I despise with a passion people that downplay the Mjolnir/Spartans. They aren't invincible I understand that. BUT! Fan-fiction authors do a blasphemous disservice to Bungie, the fans of the series, as well as any of the authors who wrote the books by making them sound like walking tin cans that should be used for target practice.

If you aren't at least willing to do the work to get your facts straight don't bother writing is my opinion on the matter.

I loathe yaoi. I have no problems with homosexuality and have quite a few lesbian as well as gay friends, I just rather not read about it. I have a very vivid imagination and reading for me is like watching a movie... you get the picture.

Genre wise, I'm fairly open minded. I don't really have a preference on character's so well developed OC's are fine. Complete stories are what I'm hoping for, or at least stories above 40k words (otherwise I finish reading them in way to fast and I'm back where I started) in length that are regularly updated.

That's pretty much it. Please help me out!

No Index for this chapter and the next one is either going to be one of the OC's or... well too be honest I don't know. Give me an opinion/reason for a character in the SC universe and I'll throw in the research and time to be accurate as possible.

RNG

5. Feet First into Hell

****A.N. ****It's a bit earlier than expected but for some reason this chapter is already finished.

Now then.

I am very happy that you, the readers, helped me out when I asked for it with your comments. I don't think I need to point out I'm making zilch for the time and effort being put into this. So the smiles and laughs I get out of reading your reviews are my only rewards.

Moving on here are the responses to reviews (I'll try and keep them shorter than last time). Remember I am not attempting to intellectually browbeat anyone, just giving the reasons and examples that I've researched to write this story. The last chapter brought up some points I overlooked, THAT is the reason I want your input. It helps make this story better.

As a note these reviews are written in the order I read them.

****Kane (unsigned reviewer) ~**** Thank you. Your review is the kind I'm looking for, it helps me find out what I'm doing wrong with a good amount of support. I'm trying my best to keep the POV balanced/unbiased.

I know my grammar can use some work... which is depressing because I went to college to be an English teacher (sad huh?). Also I can promise you that Gabriel Tosh will be making it into the Index SOON, not this chapter cause I already decided on who it was going to be before reading your review. Patience on that front, please.

On the subject of Cortana, time will tell.

****StarCraft is awesome**** ~ On shredder rounds, they are splinter rounds. They lack penetration power and are instead designed to maim or cause tremendous tissue damage. The following statement is taken from the Halo wikia: the real world variant would be JHC, or

****j**acketed ****h**ollow ****c**avity** ammunition.****

However I will also mention that weapons like this are more of the psychological side of warfare, seeing an ally torn apart with massive damage would be terrifying and effect moral.

On the assimilation of tech, I agree on the points you brought up and I am not denying that the standard SC marine is better equipped then the standard U.N.S.C. Marine. On artillery, your 2 - 1 Scarab/Thor ratio, I cannot find all the data necessary to make a viable comparison. However, I can give you the information that I have found and you can draw your own conclusions.

I have the sizes given for a Scarab which is fucking massive by the way: 48.6 meters (159 feet) in length 48.2 meters (158 feet) in width and 19.8 meters (65 feet) in height and weighing 3439 metric tons (3.439 million kilograms or 7565800 pounds). For its main armament it uses a Plasma beam cannon (similar to ones used on Covenant capital ships for orbital bombardments).

From the descriptions of the Thor that I found and the research I've done, it doesn't sound as large as a scarab and I cannot find a list of measurements. Its heaviest weapons are the 250 mm cannons.

This isn't all that large, that's only 25 centimeters or a 9.84 inch round. Now, that's massive in comparison to a normal weapon but this is "heavy" artillery we're talking about. That is smaller than many weapons used during World War II e.g. the Yamato class battleships had guns firing 460 mm, or 46 cm (18.1 inch) rounds.

A real life comparison, although this is a battleship weapon and the payload of rounds is probably vastly different which of course affects the damage done I'm just using it for a perspective. Also, because of its 2 legged configuration I doubt that its heavy as a Scarab (more legs = better distribution/handling of weight) though I would expect it to be a lot more maneuverable.

My personal opinions? I think the Thor would get stepped on, but that's just me. The Thor is a smaller version of the Odin walker. Sooo..., yeah, smaller. Plus, I get a laugh at the thought of a Scarab walking around stepping on stuff. Though realistically I think the ratio would be 1 â€" 1 they would both inflict so much damage to each other they would be rendered equally useless.

As always thank you for your review.

****Cursed-Mazrim ****~ A new reviewer. Thanks for your review! I am happy that you are satisfied with the portrayal that I'm setting up. I forgot about all the stuff I can find out by playing through the SC. Looks like I'll be doing the campaign... again... damn.****

****G-Force 1 ~ ****I agree with your observation. The lack of SC x Halo crossovers (or their respective stories themselves) is odd in my mind.****

I love ****Freedom Guard****'s work and I have a few of his stories listed under my favs on my profile. He hasn't updated in a while sadly... well if he's reading this right now, hope you come back dude.

I've read works by ****Harbinger Of Kaos**** as well and I am a fan. I have issues logging in on my mobile so I haven't added the stories by him I like yet... Thinking now I should go do that.

You're also a first time reviewer. Thank you for your input and comments, I'm happy you approve :D

****Shadowz117 ~ ****On Cortana you have to read this chapter to find out. Or it may just leave you begging for the next chapter... who knows read to find out I say!

You seem to agree with some of the things I mentioned earlier for ****StarCraft is awesome****'s review. Like I said I can't give a fully accurate analysis and just my opinions. It's fun to see how much the story's getting you guys to oust your opinions though. The research aspect of this is entertaining and relaxing for me so I appreciate someone actively doing their own digging.

Thanks for the review!

Onto the story.

RNG

Chapter IV

Feet First into Hell

****U.N.S.C. Human Entry Vehicle****

****FFG SOEIV - 6****

****0955 Hours****

With explosive force the door to the HEV was blown away from the pod. The black barrel of an SMG emerged from the metal cocoon first, sweeping back and forth, wearily searching for any targets.

"Cortana," John slipped out of the HEV, leaving the energy sword off, his SMG held ready for any hostiles that suddenly appeared. Nothing. He checked his scanners. Clear. "any idea where we are?" he asked satisfied he wasn't walking into an ambush. He holstered the weapons in his hands. The silvery handle of his energy sword and the SMG attaching to his hips with a metallic clack.

****This is Mar Sara****

****Koprulu Sector****

John blinked rapidly as the letters faded away from his HUD, he had been expecting a verbal answer. So many years of hearing Cortana's voice in his helmet had driven him to assume it would stay the same. Assumptions got soldiers killed. This would take getting used too.

As he reread the words floating in front of his eye, a sense of unease filled the pit of his stomach. He didn't recognize the name of the world they were currently on and the system was unfamiliar to

him. A new settlement? Recolonization or an expansion effort?

"How did yo-"

****Scanned local channels****

Improvise! Adapt! Overcome!'_

The words, so long ago spoken to him by his mentor roared in his mind. Chief Mendez would have a field day if he ever learned of how uncomfortable he was right now. A sense of calm cloaked him like a warm blanket.

He reached into the storage areas of the HEV grabbing the assault rifle, sniper rifle and the bags full of munitions. "Can you not do that?" John asked, referencing the massive text on his HUD, while slinging one of the bags over his shoulder and attaching the other to his lower back via special clips. It took far longer than he wanted for the answer to come, he needed to get moving. Standing here could be causing U.N.S.C. Personnel to lose their lives.

****I would rather not****

The Spartan froze in place as he checked over the assault rifle, "Explain."

****My speech subroutines****

It stopped there, he waited in silence for her to continue.

****Malfunctioned****

****When I accessed the local network****

He sensed a "But" floating around in there, but after waiting for a few seconds gave up on getting her too answer. "We'll talk later." he spoke the words in monotone, so they wouldn't betray him. Though internally; now more than anything he wanted to sit down, find out exactly what was going on and then plan from there.

_ 'No plan survives first contact with the enemy!' _

Looks like he'd be improvising.

"Range to the unknowns?" he pulled four plasma grenades from the bag hanging by his right shoulder, replacing those he had used on the Forward Unto Dawn. Then activated the other pair tossing them into the now empty HEV. It was U.N.S.C. Property and as such he couldn't allow it to fall into enemy or unknown hands. Turning from the doomed vehicle he took off at a jog to get enough distance between him and the blast. Their detonation would render any chance at salvage impossible, leaving only a burnt out husk of Titanium A.

This time instead of text appearing in the big boxy letters from before, a new small box appeared in the bottom left hand side of his HUD.

****Will this better suit your needs ****

"Much, but you didn't"

Range to unknowns is two kilometers NNE

" ... "

The Chief suppressed a groan. Even when she was stuck with whatever it was that was messing with her, Cortana was still snippy as ever. He took a last glance over his shoulder at the smoldering carcass of the HEV, offering it quick salute.

It seemed necessary at the time.

The Spartan ran, the distance underfoot disappearing in no time. In the silence a chill crept up his spine again, he wouldn't say anything about it yet. He would ignore it even though it went against every synapse that was currently firing. Until the situation was over, he had his priorities. His concerns could and would wait.

Though John still felt it deep in his gut gnawing away like a rabid beast.

Cortana was hiding something from him.

* * *

><p>Koprulu Sector

Mar Sara System â€" Terran Dominion

17 Kilometers SSW of Vespene Refinery DF 113-8

1000 Hours

There it was towering over the battlefield, the monolithic sized abomination feared throughout the Dominion. Two stories tall and nearly five times that in length, the majority of that being exclusive to the elephantine body and the deadly "Kaiser blade" arms slung beneath its head. Ultralisk. The name inspired awe... and fear, a true testament of destruction to its enemies. The Zerg terror had one focus, one thought, one goal.

The total destruction of enemies to the Swarm.

The earth shook beneath its mighty feet, crushing boulder as easily as it would flesh and bone.

"I'll draw it off!"

The bark of a canister rifle and Nova dashed forward; firing round after round of high explosive at the living tank, pummeling its less protected and more exposed face that lay beneath the heavily armored cranium above it.

"Get back here!"

The Ultralisk roared, letting its rage be known at the tiny being who dared challenge it. The cacophony of grenade fire and the sergeants' orders was drowned out in its fury. Charging like a maddened beast,

it attempted to smother her beneath its mighty tree sized feet, shaking its massive blade like arms in an attempt of knocking her away.

Nova dodged each strike with the grace of a dancer, a deadly waltz with a foe many times larger than herself. Then right as it seemed that one of the blades would strike her, she vanished into thin air.

A white blur and nearly twenty meters away, the ghost appeared as if by magic. She let loose with a barrage of cannon fire. Explosions erupted over the beasts unprotected flank, craters erupted in its thick scaly hide. Only enraging it further. It turned fully to face her and attacked; fury burning in its soulless pitted eyes, the creatures four legged stride eating away at the distance between them in a flash.

The ghost vanished again, the monstrosity roared as grenade fire tore into its great scaly back. The tiny figure appeared once more, now even further away from the main battle that was still raging, the destructive symphony rocked the land as missile fire met beast and claw met armor.

Rage aimed at the tiny creature to deal it so much harm was fueling its limbs. The Ultralisk began its pursuit, eager to end the thorn in its side once and for all.

* * *

><p>The trip was made in silence and even with all the gear he carried the Spartan II made good time, his armored form flying across the ground at a breakneck 85 kilometers per hour. With the sniper rifle held ready in his hands the super soldier left a trail of dust in his wake.<p>

Keen ears picked up a noise he was all too familiar with.

Gunfire.

The Chief slid to a stop behind an outcropping of boulders, bringing the weapon in his hands to bear.

John looked at his HUD's scanners. Of the thirty odd number of dots on his radar; six of them were colored yellow, most of them in a small cluster. A lone yellow dot swiftly moving away from the main group. The rest of the contacts were colored red moving in too surround the cluster of yellow though a larger red dot broke from the group to chase after the lone yellow one. The pair flashed one last time as they moved out of his range and current concern.

He would find the lone wolf later.

****Analysis of targets****

****No recognized IFF readings****

****Matching scans of earlier known hostiles****

Two three dimensional images appeared beside his radar, showing

models of the aliens he encountered in the Dawn.

****Additional scan suggests five humans****

****Unknown model of armor****

A third image appeared, a vague picture lacking any color just a wire frame, of a bulky looking suit.

****Suggest hit and run tactics.****

Chancing a glance around his cover, keen eyes instantly assessed the situation. Everything checked out, if you ignored the five strange beings in the orange armor. It looked somewhat similar to his own Mjolnir...

On steroids.

They were bulky things with visible machinery in its joints and torso. Hydraulics's maybe? That thing on their backs looked like a small turbine engine. For the most part they looked like they could be human, their sizes ranging from a foot shorter or taller than himself in his armor. Their weapons however...

Were massive.

Unwieldy bricks of metal, at least that's how they seemed. Though the sound they made was something John was able to identify. Rifle fire. He watched as one of the unknowns, carrying what looked like a pair of gray rectangular boxes each almost five feet in length on his back, flipped one of the boxes over their left shoulder turning towards a rushing group of enemies and slapped a hand down on one side.

A twin gout of flame blew out one end and the Chief's eyes barely caught sight of the rockets streaking out the other before they detonated amongst a group of the smaller aliens.

The audio sensors of his suit surprised him, his mind focusing on a single word when they picked up something the Chief was familiar with.

"HOORAH!"

'Well, that answers the big question.'

The Chief set the extra bags of equipment down. The bags themselves were rusty red and they fit in well with the terrain. He noted the cover memorizing its location.

"We're helping them."

****I knew you would say that****

The Chief answered with a grunt as he pulled back on the the SRS99D-S2's action, sliding one of the 14.5 x 114mm rounds into the chamber. He assessed the plan one last time.

Five visible unknowns fighting a force of known hostiles. A final unknown leading something away. He was alone on a planet with no form

of extraction. The unknowns weapons and armor suggested advanced technology, they were currently engaging a force that had already proven themselves hostile. The new group may be able to provide transport off planet. If not they could at least direct him to the nearest U.N.S.C. controlled space and he would figure it out from there.

They could be New-Generation Insurrectionist, a splinter group from the U.N.S.C. That would be bad.

This was assuming that those orange unknowns were even human. Chances seemed to be in his favor though.

Worst case scenario, all the forces were hostile and he'd find himself in a three-way fire fight.

****Your plan is not wise****

The Spartan gave a non-committal shrug with his reply, "We've faced worse."

The Chief brought the rifle up to his shoulder looking through the scope, moving the targeting reticule from one of the aliens to the next. A quick test. Half the hostiles would be neutralized in the rush.

****I never said I did not approve****

"I knew you liked crazy."

His right hand clasped one of the plasma grenades hanging from the bandolier slung over his chest. The Chief noted the targets distances and calculated trajectories one last time; then broke away in a dead sprint from his hiding place, his right arm blurring in an over head swing while the other brought the sniper rifle up in front of him.

* * *

><p>"That BITCH!" Lester screamed gunning down a Zergling that got too close, the bark of his C-14 was accompanied by it's howls. "She ditched us!" he added tearing a new Zergling from his back before slamming his armored boot on its head, pulping its contents. He turned to his team, hoping to get some help. His part of the perimeter was failing, there were to many incoming tangos, he turned yelling.<p>

"Sarge! I need back u-"

His shout caught in his throat, three hungry sets of eyes bore into his. The Zerglings leaped in the air, jowls slobbering as their mighty blade like limbs blurred to strike.

A triple report of thunder, massive craters tore into the creatures skulls mid-leap and geysers seemed to erupt from the back of their heads as they tumbled in the air. They met the ground sliding to rest inches from his feet.

Lester's eyes went wide, _'Damn Ryu nice sh-' _the thought froze as he looked to his left. There stood Ryu, but instead of his usual sniper rifle it seemed he had found a C-14 and was using it as a

replacement for the slower firing weapon. The man was casually picking out targets and blasting them with a hailstorm of depleted uranium.

A small light in the corner of his eye snatched his attention and Lester watched as a tiny glowing blue sphere attached itself to one of the Hydralisks standing in a pack of four others. The group of Zerg and the one it landed on ignored it. The ball blinked with green; then a sclera melting light flashed before his eyes. Blinding him momentarily, even with the polarized faceplate, with the intensity of a miniature supernova.

As the spots cleared it revealed charred earth and the grotesque remains of the two surviving Hydralisks, no trace was left of the others. Steam was rising off the creatures. One was missing an arm and the majority of skull, the rest of its body looking as if it had been burned away then cauterized. It twitched violently as it lay upon the ground before stilling. The other turned around exposing its back to him as it roared weakly, massive burns and lacerations covering the expanse of its scaly hide.

He caught movement behind the remaining group of Zerg, in the direction the Hydralisk had turned. A lone figure far in the distance, Lester activated his helmets telescopic zoom. There nearly a half a kilometer away, it was only a bit smaller than his CMC "300 and the figure running towards them wore alien looking green armor with tracings of black. A large weapon was carried in its hands, aimed in their direction, he saw the muzzle flash.

Seconds later, three deep reports of a high caliber rifle rang through his ears and the same number of zerg fell.

Whoever they were, they were good. Better yet, it seemed they were on the same team.

_'Damn.' _"Saaaaarge!" Lester shouted.

He could barely hear his voice over the howls and gunfire.

"Dammit Rookie! Wha' is it?"

"Found tha lady who sent that distress call!" he shouted back gesturing at the armored being moving towards them at high speeds. Traveling at speeds far faster than any human should possibly be able to reach.

The Zerg seemed to sense that this new player could break their checkmate on the human forces. A large number of them turned, Zerglings rushing forward as Hydralisks fired off volleys of their spiked projectiles.

When asked later about what they saw, the marine would only answer in whispers. Like a shadow the armored being weaved through the Zerg ranks, moving with an inhuman grace and speed. They would remember being unable to track the movement when the unknown warrior switched weapons, yet it happened right in front of their eyes. Machine gun fire roared, the blasts and explosions of those tiny stars where the little blue orbs landed. The booming reports of a shotgun. The anguished cries of the Zerg as one after another their ranks fell.

The armored being charged at one of the zerg twin weapons in hand blazing. Then they leaped; LEAPED, over the Hydralisk letting its bladed swing meet nothing, flipping in the air as if in slow motion. With a snap and hiss a glowing blue light formed in the shape of two curved elongated blades, half the blade vanished as the arm holding it blurred burying itself deep into the creatures head. The figure landed on both feet still moving at a full sprint and seconds later the Hydralisk fell to the ground with a pair of steaming holes in its skull.

It was like watching death given a living form.

Rookie watched awestruck as the glowing double blade of light flashed from the green figures fist. He couldn't fathom the terrible dance that broke out after that weapon appeared. It hissed and crackled as it was swung, heads and limbs slipping from their places on bodies as it cut through them like warm butter. The abrupt roars of small arms fire and bullet casings filled the air, from this range the muzzle flashes lit up on the golden polarized faceplate on the armored beings head.

The figure caught, in their hands, the slashing blades of a Zergling. The creature squawked trying to tear free smaller limbs lashing out at the being who had captured it in their grasp. The armored figure pulled the Zergling to them, right leg appearing faster than can be seen planting itself on the beasts muzzle.

A high pitched shrieking filled the air as the spine mounted claws were torn off, a flood of blood spewed from the tattered ends of the stumps. The figure tossed the dismembered pieces of the beast away, planted its hands on the ground and performed a massive spinning push-up, arms drawing weapons once more as its left leg was held high over the crippled Zerg coming down in a devastating axe kick atop the creatures head driving it into the dirt, silencing its cries of pain forevermore.

Weapons held at the ready the being swept the barrel of the tiny odd gun around in front of them. An odd silvery pommel held in the other hand.

The remaining Zerg roared. This... thing had decimated them. One by one, two by two, numbers didn't seem to matter to this armored being. The remaining Zerglings charged, two Hydralisks waited behind them. Planning, plotting, searching for this beings weakness.

A lone Hydralisk exploded from beneath the earth throwing up a massive plume of dirt and gravel as it emerged roaring. It swung its scythe like arms trying to split the armored warrior in half, a halo of gold sparked to life around the figure, then flashed in a shower of sparks and lightning.

Amidst the erratic light display the warrior spun glowing blade in hand, they struck twice in the blink of an eye. The figures other arm snapped up, emptying an entire magazine of the odd looking pistol into the face of a charging Zergling it fell to the onslaught coming to rest at the figures feet. Hands blurred, the metallic clack of a magazine being switched out filled the air.

Then the Hydralisk shuddered as it gave a keening wail and then fell

to the ground in bloody chunks.

The rest of the squad stood beside him now, no longer worried about the Zerg who all faced this new threat. Lester heard but couldn't understand the words being shared between Sarge and Arms. Though from the speed and clipped tones it was probably along the lines of.

What the hell is that thing and what do we do about it?

A pained howl died off after a final crack of gunfire in the valley and then silence.

The men watched in awed silence.

They were Marines, and they were damn good at what they did. They knew how the Zerg fought, down to the last. Never retreating always overwhelming, a Marine was lucky to survive more than five Zerg encounters during his active career. The majority of them had, in fact, survived many more than this. All of them except Rookie. Watching this fight though had told them fairly quick, this guy in green armor was a whole different league.

No one spoke as they watched this Angel of Death slowly stand, stepping away from the dead Hydralisk at its feet and reloading the odd looking rifle in its hands. Nearly twenty Zerg, laid to waste by this lone warrior, almost a quarter of the force they had faced. A feat that only took a few minutes to occur.

The being then attached the weapon onto its back, causing near ominous clacks of metal on metal to ring in their ears.

The green figure turned to them, giving them a nod, then took off kicking up dirt and dust before the marines could say a word. Fading into the distance heading into the direction that one of their own had gone earlier.

Lester looked at the spot the armored being had stood, then at the retreating figure moving away in the distance. He snorted, then cheered throwing his hand up in the air.

He was alive! His first successful engagement against the Zerg and he had won.

That is what mattered in his book, he turned to the rest of his squad opening his helmets visor as they did the same. Each member wearing confused and tired looks.

"Hell," he said breaking out into a smirk, "Think I can get her number?"

* * *

><p>It had started out as such a nice day. Sure a couple zerg had busted up there initial landing, and sure the men she was with didn't seem like the brightest bunch. She could ignore the fact that a man who seemed to have nothing but her best interest at heart was now a flaming carcass. She could ignore how she had telepathically felt every emotion he had, when he was blown to bits.<p>

_'Should have walked away right when I heard the word Zerg. Done

the mission solo.'_

Nova could do all those things because most of those Zerg were dead. THEY and DEAD, being keywords. Her quarry however, just wouldn't die!

She cursed under her breath firing another canister grenade from her rifle. The round exploded in the face of the enemy she was leading away from the group.

She sprinted through the legs of the monstrosity; weaving about the massive limbs that could easily crush her, it roared at her in fury. Round after round punched into its less protected belly and like purple rain, blood dripped onto her bodysuit.

It was to be a simple insertion and investigation. In and out with none the wiser, quick and efficient.

But this Ultralisk ruined all of it.

_'And then of all the ideas I came up with, I picked _this_ one.'_

Her psionic powers were at an all time low from the spectacle she pulled earlier. Not taking the medication afterward to even herself out had been a terrible idea. The continuous use of her psionics to cloak as well as using it to increase her speed and strength, now had her running on fumes.

'Can't stealth, doing this the fun way.'

The woman threw herself backwards over one of the kaiser blades that would have cut her off at the knees, firing a volley of bullets from her C-20A rifle at the apex of her flight into the creatures joints hoping to disable it. The ghost hand planted the leap, pushing herself back into the air with one arm before gracefully tucking into a roll beneath the other kaiser blade barreling at her.

Nova came up in a crouch. Then, with the speed of a cobra burst into movement dashing away, firing round after round of depleted uranium into the beasts roaring maw. She ejected the spent clip, slim fingers moving over equipment in a blur as deft hands switched ammo, loading her remaining Hellfire grenade.

The grenade split up into multiple heat-seeking munitions when fired and would hopefully deal enough damage if she hit a critical area that the beast would stay down.

The deadly explosive tore from the barrel with a roar, several miniature contrails forming the instant it left blew through the muzzle. Four hit their mark, devastating the left side of the beasts massive skull, leaving a macabre of broken bone and flesh in its place. It roared in unkempt fury and charged.

She leaped in the air aiming to springboard off the beasts skull when confusion hit her like a freight train. She felt weightless and the target she was aiming for had disappeared, yet the feeling vanished just as quickly when one of the Ultralisk's massive tusks appeared.

In front of her! How did it move that fast?

'Shit.'

The last second psionic shield did no more than save her from instant death. Which instantly seemed like the smarter alternative. She had been lucky that she was struck with the flat side of the blade, or she would have been split in half. Yet it did not change the fact that behind the attack was enough force to knock over heavily armored tanks.

More than enough to send her small form flying.

Nova screamed, blood flying from her mouth from the impact. Like a rocket she flew into the wall of a cliff, hitting its surface so hard the crash shattered the rock behind her. The small generators on her armors back were sputtering and sparking out. Sliding down the wall she fell to her knees, barely bracing herself off the ground with her arms.

A wet cough filled her ears. She could taste the metallic ooze that was dribbling from her lips, her vision was blurry, everything was ringing. Nova looked down as she tried to catch her breath. Her shield had done little to save her armor; the front plate of her Neo-steel chest piece had a massive crack running down its center, the inside was so dented it was caving in her chest making it difficult to breath. Her whole body burned with indescribable pain, nearly on par with the pain that was occurring inside her skull from using her telekinesis on empty. The overall feeling she was experiencing was far worse than any torture she had been put through during her Ghost Training.

Looking up, the massive paws of the Ultralisk greeted her. They stomped the earth beneath them, beating upon it like a drum. It roared triumphantly as the dirt was tossed up in a dust cloud around her. Her eyes trailed higher coming to a rest on the mutilated face and its soulless remaining eye. It raised its body up on its hind legs, the massive front paws high above her.

At the last second Nova threw herself to the side, and agony tore through her as she landed. Her unsteady left hand dug into a compartment on her armor, tearing her mask off and throwing it aside with the other hand. She brought the inhaler to her lips just as the Ultralisk was about to try and smash her into paste once more.

The tree trunk like feet came down, she threw her hands up in front of her.

A wall of blue energy swirled to life around her, the aura barely holding off the untimely fate she would encounter if those limbs reached her. It swirled about her being like a small tornado, coalescing into a single glowing orb that clung tight to her body.

She screamed with the exertion it drew from her, the pure psionic storm shot off with an explosive gale as it threw the Ultralisk back, its massive torso moving through the air at such speed it was nothing but a blur. The tendrils of blue and purple fire and lightning connecting it to the woman smashing through stone and earth as it forced the massive beast further and further away from their

user.

The beast roared as its back was met by a wall of stone as stubborn to break as it was. Cracks formed in the wall as the beast struggled to get free, slamming its massive body against earth and stone.

Nova panted heavily, a red foam bubbling at her lips and her eyes alight with blue flame. Her hands fell limply to rest on the dirt below; she tried with all her might to bring them up once more, to no avail and the rest of her body followed the limbs to the dirt. She coughed again and more blood dribbled from her lips, she was tired, too tired and pained to move from her prone position on the ground. She mentally cursed, she had taken the medicine that acted like a stim-pack for ghosts far too late. As the darkness claimed her, she could feel through the ground the heavy footfalls of the Ultralisk coming to finish the job.

The hallucinations were starting, and they would be what would greet her into the cold embrace of death. Tears formed in the ghosts eyes, but she blinked them away. She was stronger now than she was as a child and she braced herself mentally as the torrent of images flashed through her mind, reminding the woman of what she had lost so long ago.

The painful memories and the feeling of living through every second of terror her mother went through as she was murdered.

Cries of outrage and fear as her father faced the same fate.

Her time at the crime lord Fagin's mercy.

The paces she went through for the training in the Ghost program.

The passion kindled in her hidden relationship with a fellow trainee.

The terror as those precious moments were torn away with a memory wipe.

It was too much, far too much for her current state. Those screams from her past beating a steady drumbeat on her mind, like a powerful undertow they pulled her closer and closer to despair. With a shaky breath Nova let the shadow of unconsciousness claim her.

* * *

><p>Massive fluctuation ahead

No evidence of weapon use

No signs of natural phenomena

"What the hell was that?" The Chief walked slowly; assault rifle in one hand the activated energy sword in his other fist, up to the dying monstrosity in front of him. Approaching the scene he had arrived just in time to see. The massive beast was weakly trying to drag itself in the direction that it had flown from. The display had been something that defied all logic.

****I advise caution****

It had looked like the thing was thrown about by vivid blue and purple hued physical manifestations of lightning. The glowing arcs and discharges had destroyed rock formations and left scorch marks on any surface they touched.

He shook his head, _'Whoever did that has some pretty crazy energy weapons.'_ John thought to himself. Bringing up the rifle in his hands he looked at the creature that still had yet to notice his presence.

****Observations aside****

It looked like... John silently took the sight in as he thought, _'Those old cargo haulers from the industrial revolution.'_ a train with four large bent tree trunks being used for limbs, "Ugly isn't it?"

****You should kill it****

****Before it sees you****

"I don't think that's necessary." John answered, the beast had stilled and the heat sensors read it as cold. He kept his weapon out as he walked in the direction that the creature had been dragging itself. "What was with the light show?" He asked, the sight had him a bit unnerved.

****Analysis suggest electromagnetic****

****However scans are inconclusive****

The sound of a wet cough hit his ears and John focused on its origin.

'The hell?'

He jogged up to the prone figure his confusion becoming larger and larger.

A woman, definitely a human woman, the muscle tone he could see showed that she had been military trained. Civilians didn't get tone like that. A skin tight white body suit with blue trimmings and some kind of armor plates covering the shoulders, chest, hands, shins, and feet. Though he could smell burnt wiring and something he couldn't identify from the wrecked chest piece. Glowing cords and emitters covered the ensemble and he saw an odd looking mask laying nearby.

****Interesting armor****

"That's not armor..., that's a swim suit." John muttered, his sexual drive may be suppressed but he could tell when he saw an attractive woman. Though this young woman looked like she had just reached adulthood, couldn't be older than twent-

****I think you should remove her chest piece****

****It seems to be strangling her****

"Right," John leaned down, testing where he could get a solid grip. He pushed gently where the crack ran down the center, no blood poured from it, yet she gave a pained moan. He searched for any mechanisms to remove it, the armor seemed to be molded to her form, and he didn't want to tear anything or aggravate hidden wounds. "How do you-"

****Your sense of honor will kill her****

John frowned to himself, this woman wasn't under his command. Even if she was a part of the military for whatever group they had found, she was pretty much a civilian to him since they weren't recognized.

****Saving her life****

****Could put us in their good graces****

He relented and dug his fingers into the crack, then pulled straining against the metal. He noted that the plates didn't seem very thick, which was good. It began to give way, slowly. The screech of tearing armor rang through his ears and like an egg broke away. He continued his work in silence until the woman was free.

Throwing the broken off pieces away John studied the woman in front of him, dirty as she was. Her blonde hair was mussed up in a ragged ponytail and covered in dirt, she must have been hit somewhere on the back of the head some of the locks were muddled and caked with blood. She definitely didn't have the appearance of a front line soldier, more like a-

****We have visitors****

John spun around surging to his feet with the shotgun in his right hand the ignited plasma sword in his other. The entire group from earlier stood before him guns drawn.

One of the largest unknowns in orange armor walked towards him, lowering its massive rifle. John did the same, keeping the shotgun ready but turning off and putting the energy sword back on his hip.

The Chief watched curiously, prepared for an attack, the golden faceplate on the large unknown opened. It slid away to reveal a strong set jaw covered with a scraggly mustache, weathered looking tan skin and a hardened brown eyed glare.

A human.

The black man cocked a thick eyebrow at the Spartan as he growled, "_What_ are you?" the words themselves carried a heavy accent. With the way it was being spoken it sounded as if the man was trying very hard to make sure every word came out just right.

The others in the group standing behind the man opened their helmets as well, revealing more men and mixed expressions. Confusion being chief among them. Except for a lone man with blue eyes whose glare spoke of untold animosity.

"Master Chief Petty Officer Sierra-One-One-Seven of the United Nations Space Command Defense Force," John gave the man to approach him a salute, it was unnecessary but if these men were military it might ease tension.

At the sound of the Chief's voice one of the squads, he looked younger than the others, face went pale. He looked to his teammates who snickered while giving him amused looks.

The man in front of him cocked his head to the side in the helmet, unlike the Mjolnir it had the room to do so. "Neva' heard of it."

The amused looks on the groups faces disappeared being replaced with ones of suspicion.

"Sergeant Roy Kepps," the man gave him a lazy salute and John dropped the hand back to his weapon. "Where's ya lady friend?"

The question took the Chief by surprise, he hadn't realized they picked up Cortana's distress call. How they had decrypted any encoding she had used was beyond him. Though the one from the H.E.V. had been a open broadcast so it wasn't that difficult to understand.

Though John wasn't ready for them to know about her.

"She," he paused for effect "went down with the ship." he spoke the words in monotone.

****I am right here****

John muted the external speakers, "They don't need to know about you nor do they have clearance too that information. You're our trump card now Cortana."

****Would you like the scans****

****I have compiled on their armor****

"I'd rather not piss these guys off."

****We would win****

John stayed silent walking along in the middle of the group.

****Very well****

Wha' race are ya?" John looked away from the message seeing that the men had drawn their weapons again and that Roy seemed to be ready to draw his own.

This might take some time.

"I am human." John tried a different approach.

"Prove it."

The words came from the man who had been giving him an angry glare since the start. The others nodded in agreement.

"To protect and serve for the betterment of humanity was part of my training." he began.

"Ya military?"

The Chief gave the man a silent nod.

The group seemed to tense.

"Take off the fancy helmet!"

This was trouble. The Spartans faces were a secret, their anonymity was kept to keep the truth of their training and introduction to the ranks hidden. Learning that the saviors of humanity had been abducted by the military at the age of six and their families given doomed clones as replacements, would have been horrible to moral.

The Chief attempted diplomacy, "I was trained to be the protector of Earth and all her colonies." he elaborated trying to shift the attention away. Not the strongest argument but he was trying to get these men to help him, "Your squad mate is injured I was attempting to heal her however I lack the necessary equipment."

Confusion filled the air and a tense atmosphere descended upon the group as every Marine around him drew their weapons and pointed them at him.

"Ya from tha U.E.G. boy?"

He was about to reply in the affirmative, surprised that they knew what the U.E.G. was after all their claims of the U.N.S.C. not existing. At the last second however something caught his tongue, the message in Cortana's chat-box.

****Recommend denying affiliation****

****There is bad blood between the Dominion and the UEG****

What did all this mean? The United Earth Government existed here? Then where was the U.N.S.C? What was going on?

The word, so simple in its use, caught in John's throat as he spoke. "No." It felt like he was betraying each and everyone of his brothers and sisters in arms. They had died in their service to Earth and her colonies. To say that he wasn't a part of that pained him in a way he couldn't describe.

More than the pain he suffered from his augmentations, third degree burns, needler rounds, even more than a plasma sword. The pain he felt was like wrapping all of those things together, throwing it into a meat grinder then diving in and swimming to the bottom.

The tense atmosphere slowly dissipated, the sergeant giving him a final wary glance before holstering his weapon, "I dun trust ya..., Master Chief." he growled. "But ya saved meh men and ya saved me. I'll le' this slide, fer now. Stick aroun' if ya can fight like that them Zerg wont be botherin us for a while."

The other men seemed to agree with their commanding officer.

"Zerg?" John asked not sure what they meant. "What exactly are Zerg?"

"Ya ain't from round here are ya?" the sergeant asked, he pointed at the massive carcass nearby. "Tha' right thur is a Ultralisk, biggest baddest ground pounda the Zerg got." he stepped over to the creatures side hitting its armored hide with a gloved fist. "Our lil ghost seems ta know her stuff."

'So the new aliens are zerg, now wha-'

"ARMS!" the sergeant barked, "Check our ghost, keep er alive!" John was a bit confused as he watched the man gesture at the wounded woman behind him.

'Why are they calling her a ghost?'

"Got it Sarge."

The biggest member of the group ran past him, kneeling down besides the wounded woman and pulling a pack from a compartment on his armors thigh. Items easily recognizable as gauze and medical tape lined its insides, yet other things John couldn't identify.

"Break time boys! Rookie, Ryu! Defensive perimeter! Jerry! Ge' us sum food!"

John looked around noticing that the men had begun working to follow their orders. He turned away from the group and approached the Sergeant, who gave him a weary look as he moved closer.

"I need to get the rest of my gear."

The man stared at John in silence for over a minute, "How do I kno' ya ain't a threat to me an my men." he growled out his hand twitching dangerously besides his rifle.

John sighed, too reveal anything to an unknown force was against every protocol and regulation that the U.N.S.C. operated upon. "I am not here to harm your squad." he answered. "I am willing to work with you to get off planet and back to U.N.S.C. controlled space."

"I still ain't eva heard o' that."

The spartan said no more, though either way he was getting his gear at the end of this conversation.

Silence once more, then the sergeant seemed to deflate "Ya go' ten minutes. Afta tha I'm callin ya hostile."

With a nod the Spartan took off.

* * *

><p>It only took half the time he was given for him to make the trip there and back. The Chief walked over to wall of the canyon they were in, the men all glanced in his direction. Checking out their new so called ally.<p>

"Quit gawkin an ge' back to work!"

The men hastily went back to what they were doing.

The Chief threw a salute to the sergeant, he got a halfhearted wave in return. It seemed they had come to an understanding.

John had more questions than answers for what he had learned. He approached a large boulder near the wall that the men had moved the woman closer to, a large wrap of medical tape and gauze covered her torso and she seemed to still be unconscious. Setting his gear down besides him, he sat down against the wall of earth pulling his MA5B assault rifle into his lap and letting the weapon rest on his armored thigh, staring silently at it matte black finish in quiet contemplation.

This was technically the first downtime he had since being woken up from cyro. He was exhausted, hungry and confused.

The spartan shook his head, he needed to do this.

Closing his eyes; John forced the weariness out of his system. The heavy weight resting on his shoulders; the pain from his wounds on the Ark, from the situation, the earlier battle, his concerns with Cortana. They all disappeared, every sense focused on the hear and now, similar to when he was in combat.

As if she read his mind text scrawled over the little box.

****I recommend resting****

A grim stare focused on the message. It was going to be one of those days.

****I will lock your armor down****

****To prevent tampering****

"Cortana, we need to talk."

Silence answered him, an odd static filled his ears. The helmets HUD seemed to tremble then vanished. An uncomfortable feeling descended upon the Spartan as he listened to the bickering, arguing over who got most kills in the skirmish earlier. He turned his head slightly and looked at woman that lay besides him.

Static again. Waiting for her reply, John continued his observations of the group he found himself with. They reminded him slightly of U.N.S.C. Marines, slightly being key word. They fought well, did and gave their best for humanity. They utilized tactics and advanced weaponry.

However, they lacked focus and discipline.

The "Ghost" was a different matter, she was something he was uncomfortable with. He had found no weapon near or on her person that could have caused whatever damage he had seen the proof during her fight with that massive Zerg earlier, "Ultralisk." he reminded himself quietly.

He shook his head, these people were not hostile. They weren't shooting at him and he wasn't killing them. The little armistice wasn't exactly breaking any rule or regulation, at least to his knowledge. They were also technically human and fell under his directive to protect humanity.

'If Sam could see me now.'

The thought almost brought a smile to his lips, his spartan brother and one of his best friends. His fellow Spartan had been the first one to pass on, dying at nearly the start of the Human Covenant war, but the massive man had given humanity one thing that it had lacked at the time.

Hope, spurred on by the destruction of one of their star ships. The seemingly invincible Covenant ships and the man had blown one into tiny atomized bits from the inside.

It was a bittersweet memor-

"_Chief, I'm sorry..."_

A chill ran down his spine, that was Cortana's voice, and the static that had accompanied it earlier on the ship was gone. It sounded different though; it was deeper..., silkier than he remembered it being. Wait, didn't she say her programming for speech was damaged?

"Cortana, what is th-"

"_I tried so hard, I did! I swear... to kee__**p it away... but its spreading so fast..."**_

Her voice gained a deeper grainier pitch as she spoke, becoming huskier... rougher...

Why was she apologizing? Had she done something wrong? What had she tried to keep away? Was there something wrong with his armor? What was spreading? What was so bad that-

"_**I am patient and I have waited..." **_John froze, he knew that voice. **"Reclaimer_." _**it boomed in his ears.

But how? It was dead, destroyed with the Ark. Why would Cortana modulate her voic-

"_**We exist together now... two corpses in one grave..."**_

End Chapter IV

A.N. And done. That was a hell of a ride I think. For those of you that haven't figured it out the first big thing is Cortana's..., "rampancy". More on that next chapter, I will be digging fairly deep for information.

I get the feeling that I'm going to get a lot of response to this chapter (at least I hope I do).

The story thus far has pretty much been an intro arc (Thank you Storyboard). The main dive into the plot has yet to come!

****(READ THIS!)** Some notes from this chapter that clear things up
(READ THIS!):******

On my portrayal of the Chief. In the books he is smart, has an eye for detail, analytical, and crazy level brave. Also multiple times throughout he shows that he does have a sense of humor. He comes up with suicide ideas on the fly and tends to make it up as he goes even when a plan is set in motion. He adapts obscenely fast to new situations as well. He speaks up when he feels the need to, however he doesn't question people he trusts. He has a devil may care attitude about himself being put in harms way, as long as he accomplishes his mission. He is also fairly concerned with keeping allies alive. I'd like to think I did fairly well.

Rookie thinking that John was female at first, keep in mind he assumes from hearing Cortana's voice in the distress call that the Chief is a woman. Not being the smartest guy in the world is part of his character.

Ultralisk's are one of the biggest baddest mofo's in the Zerg swarm, they are hard to kill. I gave it a berserk way of thinking, big and powerful... but not all that smart, it doesn't need to be. It can kill pretty much anything 1 vs 1.

Nova ****DID**** have a secret romance with a fellow trainee (if you know who I'll give you... well something), I didn't make that up!

On the meeting with group and the Chief going as it did has a reason. Leave it be please and let the story develop.

I have an issue with authors who make it so the Chief so easily shows his face, the Spartan-II identities were kept secret. They made clones, clones for god sakes so that no one knew who they were. The Chief adheres to protocol, for that reason he wasn't willing to show them his face to prove he is human.

The somewhat easy acceptance of the Chief by the marines is ONLY because he helped them out they are not "Allies", its more of a: You aren't shooting me, so I won't shoot you deal.

On the Chief's acceptance, well his training kind of falls into this. He was trained to protect Humanity, Earth, her colonies and the U.N.S.C. as a whole. The marines haven't proven to be a full on threat and he has no chain of command to get orders from. For that reason he isn't acting all Anti-Insurrectionist.

The entire situation at the end with Cortana... is a secret.

****Done with notes.****

Now then, on the fights between the zerg and Chief and then with Nova and the Ultralisk...

Well I like to think that I set it up right. Chief had a bit of surprise on his side. The fact that he was in a excellent position for flanking (behind) the zerg forces worked out in his best interest so he got the drop on them.

For Nova, well I could see it happening... If you wish to grief me

over it please stop reading the story. I can't just make it "Oh snap! Nova is gonna lay the smack down!" I needed to give perspective. Ultralisk's are fucking dangerous and I think her having issues taking one down would stick closest to reality if she was low on energy and weakened as she was.

Also giving an idea on how powerful a psionic Nova is. Those of you who have no clue on her "Meds" yet. You will learn a bit soon, if you already figured it out please don't ruin it by spreading the word.

PM me and ask if you think you got it. Don't ruin it for others.

That's all on this front for a while.

RNG

****INDEX****

****/: System****

****/: Processing****

****/: Opening File****

****/: Processing****

****/: Subject****

****Name: UNSC A.I. Serial Number CTN0452-9****

****Alias: Cortana****

****Constructed: November 7, 2549****

UNSC Artificial intelligence serial number CTN 0452-9, also known as Cortana, is a Smart A.I. created using twenty cloned brains of Dr. Catherine Elizabeth Halsey (****File: Unavailable****) through a process known as Cognitive Impression Modeling.

Considered fairly eccentric, Cortana's primary functions are Software Infiltration, and assisting the Spartans (Additional information classified). She has shown to mirror certain thoughts, memories and opinions to Dr. Halsey.

Her first words were: Italian: "_Quando il gioco Ã" finito, il re e il pedone vanno nella stessa scatola." o_r in English standard. _"When the game is over, the king and pawn go into the same box"_

Cortana was paired with John-117 prior to the Fall of Reach.

Cortana has data on the Halo Super Weapons, including activation protocols.

Cortana was present from the Battle of Installation 04 to the Battle of Installation 05. During this time she showed signs of Rampancy. Both her and John-117 are both credited with saving the Human race as a whole. Her current location is unknown though expected to be near

or with John-117.

****All additional information is classified: Top-Secret: Eyes Only****

****/: End File****

Base Stats

Strength: 0

Speed: 0

Intelligence: 10

Noted: Cortana is programmed with every cyber-warfare trick in use. She also has the massive cognitive abilities to make new ones up on the fly.

****/: End File****

****/: System****

****/: Program Terminated****

End
file.